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# AQUAMARINES

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# AQUAMARINES

BY

NORA CHES<sup>S</sup>ON

AUTHOR OF

'BALLADS IN PROSE,' 'UNDER QUICKEN BOUGHS,  
'SONGS OF THE MORNING'

LONDON

GRANT RICHARDS

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**TO MY HUSBAND**

**WILFRID HUGH CHESSON**

**Here are some sunsets we have seen together,  
Some silver-coloured dawns we've watched apart ;  
November's twilight, May's enchanted weather,  
And the great sea known of no sailor's chart.  
Rainbows and rain are here ; and here are laughter,  
And sorrow of a glad and grieving year ;  
But joy you give me comes before and after,  
And is in every word I write you, Dear.**



THANKS are due and are here paid to the Editors of the *Academy*, *Black and White*, *Candid Friend*, *Cornhill*, *Country Life*, *Girls' Own Paper*, *Harper's*, *Idler*, *Lady's Realm*, *Leisure Hour*, *Longman's*, *Macmillan's*, *Morning Post*, *New Liberal Review*, *Outlook*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Pilot*, *Sketch*, and *Westminster Gazette*, for permission to reproduce some of the poems herein published.



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# DAYS AND NIGHTS



## TO A CHILD

H. B. C. (SEPT. 21, 1897)

LITTLE Hugh,

Another year's grass grows on you,  
Another year has trodden down  
The thyme, and left the bracken brown,  
There is less grass for men to see,  
And fewer nests in any tree.

The towns stretch wider arms afield,  
And to their march the meadows yield:  
But you are safe, you cannot change,  
Whatever hearts the years estrange  
Slowly or swiftly. You're secure,  
You shall be always sweet and pure  
As water from a mountain spring.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

Not ripening or withering  
Shall strike the seed of change in you.  
For me you never frowned or smiled,  
And solemnly your memory dwells  
In me, as sea-waves live in shells.  
No day shall make this thought untrue,  
Little child!

## THE OLD CENTURY

THE gates of Death and Life are open now,  
And o'er the first gate hangs an almond bough  
Thick-flowered with blossom, but without a leaf;  
And o'er the second gate a beech bough swings,  
Full of green leaves and rustling with birds' wings,  
Less fair than almond-blossom, not so brief.  
And near the door of Death the century stands  
With eyes that brim with wonder and with  
grief—  
An empty scabbard in her withered hands.  
Men's blood is on her feet, her breast bears scars  
Borne out of many wars.

## THE OLD CENTURY

Her eyes are tired with looking out across  
Gray leagues of loss.  
The smile upon her mouth is like the smile  
Lips of the dead wear for a little while  
Ere clay is given back again to clay,  
And mourners from the graveside turn away.  
The rose upon her cheek is pale, the hair,  
That once was golden as the garlands there,  
Upon pale brows falls gray.  
She has her back turned to the coming day,  
To-morrow has no more to her to say—  
Yesterday speaks too loudly in her ears.  
Voices that cried at Waterloo she hears,  
Behind her are the mists that overran  
The camps that slept and waked at Inkerman ;  
Red sands of Egypt in her tresses gleam  
Instead of rubies : she has dreamed the dream  
Held by the Sphinx in sleepless eyes of stone.  
About her waist for zone  
A sacred snake, wrought out of Indian gold,  
Coils, fold on gleaming fold.  
Its head is on a wound an Indian sword  
Made, when, at bidding of the tiger-lord,  
Men slew babe, maid, and mother, and a well  
Ran blood instead of water. This befell



## DAYS AND NIGHTS

Long, long ago, but in her haunted eyes  
Its picture never dies.  
She has seen kingdoms won and islands given,  
Deserts reclaimed, kings into exile driven,  
And she is weary. For a hundred years  
Has she not wept hot tears,  
And smiled and laughed? And now her course is  
run  
And she is facing to the westering sun,  
She need not smile nor weep, but evermore  
Peace shall she have, because her work is done.  
The almond-blossoms pave the way she goes ;  
Her children call her blessed, and none knows  
If lief or loath she passes through the door.

## THE SNOW

THE snow came down, unhasting and unresting,  
Fringed every naked twig in fine array  
Of crystal and white velvet, and its spray  
Hung from the eaves where swallows will be nesting  
In airs of April three months from to-day.

## GLAMOUR

The snow came down, and made the noisy city  
A place of silence and white purity,  
Changed each gaunt post to some fantastic tree  
Full-fledged with silver flowers, and in its pity,  
Surged in the streets and highways like a sea.

London lay white and bridal in the morning,  
Wheels went upon their way without a jar,  
And every city-sound was faint and far.  
Now trodden down for every street-boy's scorning  
Lies the white wonder, dead as some dropped star.

## GLAMOUR

Out of my window I looked last night ;  
Under my window the world lay white.  
Strong black shadows marked bush and tree,  
And I wondered long how this change might be—  
Had the snow stolen on us when none could see ?

Whiter and whiter the wonder grew,  
And the magic of moonlight at last I knew ;

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

With her ghostly light she had mocked the snow,  
And the sleeping houses would never know  
That the streets beneath them lay glamoured so.

And I thought, as I looked at the street grown  
strange,

How the face of the world with a dream can  
change.

How love, like the moon that I could not see,  
Makes whiter and fairer than snow can be  
My thought of my lover, his thought of me.

## THE JESTER

A JESTER, a winner of empty laughter,  
Grew sick of life, and the life hereafter,  
Of sea, and sky, and the seasons four.  
"I will die," he said, "as my mirth is dying,  
Lie down as the fallen tree is lying  
On Earth's brown bosom, and hear no more  
The madman's laughter, the sage's sighing."

## THE INN

The Jester went when his mood was sorest  
Into the heart of the autumn forest ;  
Round him and past him in nerveless haste  
The dead leaves whirled in a helpless eddy.  
“ Here,” said the Jester, “ the year makes ready  
To die as gladly as I, to waste  
Like wine that’s spilled from a cup unsteady.”

He lay in the leaves, and a sound of laughter  
Rang through the forest : before him, after,  
Around, above him the laughter swept.  
A girl came berrying down the hedges—  
The wind dropped dead at the forest edges  
As a bird from the stone that a slinger fledges.  
The woman came, and the man that slept  
In the Jester out of the dead leaves leapt ;  
He caught her hands, and her heart he kept.

## THE INN

“ MY door stands always open—  
You weary souls, come in !  
For you that tire of music,  
Here silence doth begin.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

You shall not rise for dancing,  
Or follow wandering loves,  
Here in my yew-boughs whispers  
Only the voice of doves.

“ I'll quench your thirst with water,  
Well-water clear and sweet ;  
I'll bind about with linen  
Your weary hands and feet.  
Lie down upon my couches  
That are of marble hewn,  
You shall not lift your eyelids  
For sun or star or moon.

“ The wind, howe'er it whistles,  
Shall pierce no sleeper's ear.  
The rain that wails and whimpers  
Can never enter here.  
You shall not hear men groaning  
For things that were divine,  
Flung to the outer darkness,  
Or trampled down of swine.

“ Your peace no ghost shall trouble,  
And cry of beast or foe

## SHAME

Shall sound with such a silence  
As sounds the falling snow.  
Darkness shall be your dwelling,  
With all your dreams therein.  
Come in," cries Death the landlord,  
"You'll find no better inn."

## SHAME

"I LOVE thee so, I love thee so,  
I will not ever let thee go,"  
Shame said, and kissed me tenderly ;  
"I will be to thee for thy wife,  
And all the nights and days of life  
Shall find me faithful unto thee.  
  
"The vine and peaches thou dost set  
Shall bear my mark, lest thou forget.  
The labour of thy weary hands  
We two will eat ; we two will drink  
Life's cup, and, when thy soul-fires sink,  
I'll blow flame up into the brands.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

“Hate me or love me : I am thine,  
My tears are in thy cup for wine,  
My laughter is thy musicking ;  
No strength in fennel shalt thou find  
To put my weakness from thy mind,  
To loosen these my hands that cling.

“I love thee so, my mate, my mate,  
That when thy bearers for thee wait,  
I will not wholly let thee go :  
But I will plant above thy sleep  
Flowers that shall my memory keep  
When thou art earth in earth below.”

## THE SMITER

*I AM the sword :*  
That out of eternity came ;  
Not water baptized me but flame.  
Earth made me not, neither the sea,  
But the fire in the earth's middle night  
Drave me into the light.  
Sorrow I never have known,  
But hunger and thirst are my own,

## THE SMITER

And the joy when man lusteth to slay  
His brother, and take to his prey  
The woman made prize of the fray.  
Conquered and conquerors still  
Are but the slaves of my will.  
No one I bow to as Lord,  
Hearken to me—  
*I am the sword.*

*I am the sword :*  
Kingdoms have fallen and risen  
Since I broke out of my prison,  
Deep in the heart of the fire,  
Shining and hot with desire.  
Kingdoms shall pass and arise,  
Earth be made new, and new skies ;  
Love shall take Death for a friend  
Ere my rule come to an end.  
Angels in heaven afar,  
Are they not angels of war ?  
Michael bears me at his side,  
Splendid, a weapon of pride.  
Lucifer's sword is of light,  
Supple as cord,  
*I am all swords and his sword.*



## DAYS AND NIGHTS

*I am the sword :*

Of all the tears that have poured  
Over my brightness remains  
None, though a widow's, to show  
Splendour was weaker than woe.  
I am the maker of kings :  
Man sees me gleam, and he sings  
Songs that drive onward to death.  
Give me of blood and of breath,  
And I will give you again  
A minute that shines over pain,  
Over terror and death to deny  
That the spirit of man can die.  
I am the changer of life,  
Not only master of strife,  
Since to my lover I lend  
Peace and clear sight at the end.  
*I am the sword.*

## THUS SPAKE THE SEA

## THUS SPAKE THE SEA

THUS spake the Sea:

“ Come down and wash the world-stains from your  
hands,

And from the tumult of the city free

Your soul that cramped within your body dwells,

Like the sea-voices prisoned in old shells

Long kept in chambers that have known not me.

Come, you who know the city's best and worst,

And with my wind and water quench the thirst

That mortal has for immortality.

“ I change, estrange, and ruin many lands,

Desert whom once I sought my love to be,

And for the inland places have desire.

Have I not loved and left Tarshish and Tyre ?

And greater brides than these

Shall I not take to me, and fill with pride,

Until, world-wide,

The rumour of their splendour spreads and grows

As fragrant as a rose ?

Then like to Vashti scorned and put aside

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

They shall behold new glories crowned of me :  
Behold with lips that writhe and wringing hands  
Their harbours empty, and their prophets cease,  
Themselves forgotten even of their foes.

“ I change from day to day, yet,” said the Sea,  
“ Nothing of change upon myself can be.

And though I leave my lovers, and to none  
Am faithful, though the fairest 'neath the sun,  
Yet whoso loves me shall be loved of me—

Yea, though I drown him. Though no human  
hands

Can bind me, with a thousand silver strands  
I knit men's souls to mine, and what I find  
Harsh and unlovely, there I breathe my wind  
And blow my foam, and that mine own I make  
Till it grows clean and lovely for my sake.

Even as the Last Day shall work change in me  
And set my buried secrets once more free,  
So I change souls, and breathe my quickening  
breath

On what the world has stricken with slow death.

“ The earth is not more fruitful than am I.  
A million lives in me are born and die

## JACINTH

And change : and I am changed not ; islands grow  
Out of my depths and they no poorer show,  
The divers steal my pearls day after day  
And from the beach I drag but stones away,  
Yet I have endless pearls for men to bear  
Out of my darkness to the upper air.  
Daughters of men, short-lived, my corals wear  
And to the dust go down,  
And I, immortal, neither smile nor frown.  
For all these things are naught; why should the Sea  
Grudge pearls, that shall breed pearls when Time  
is dead  
And her last ray of light the moon has shed ?”

## JACINTH

(DEAF AND DUMB)

JACINTH, Jacinth, where do you go  
With your eyes like spring and your step like snow?  
Who wrought, my Jacinth, your yellow hair  
In the self-same colour that daffodils wear

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

When they open first to the kiss of spring  
And have heard no whisper of withering ?  
Who gave you, Jacinth, your violet eyes  
Where sorrow close beside laughter lies ?  
Who made your face like a soft white rose  
And your mouth like a blossom that no bee knows ?  
Who made you timid and sweet and fair  
As a snowdrop first in the wintry air ?

Jacinth, turn to us, speak and say  
Are you fire or air, or sweet human clay ?  
O little dumb mouth, will you never part  
Your twin red leaves, though I break my heart ?  
O small deaf ears, will you open not  
To any whisper of love begot ?  
My fingers plead, and your fingers say  
Half in earnest, and half in play,  
“ I'm half a fairy, and no one knows  
The way to hold when a fairy goes.”  
And are you going, and must you pass,  
Little sweet Jacinth ? Then, alas !

I said, alas ! that the child must go  
To the light above from the dusk below ;  
I prayed wild prayers, but at last it fell

## JACK O' LANTHORN

That Jacinth went, and I said, "'Tis well."  
She never will hearken a cruel word  
That other women will hear and have heard ;  
She never will say a word less sweet  
Than the small red mouth that utters it ;  
She never will change from gold to clay,  
Jacinth, sweet, you are well away !

## JACK O' LANTHORN

CAN you not see me careless? Can you not feel  
me weak,  
Dear hands upon my heartstrings, dear lips upon  
my cheek?  
Out of a world of wandering men is this the man  
you seek?

These eyes that look through yours, my dear, have  
looked into the pit,  
Will look again and yet again and linger over it :  
For there are lights that shine at nights not all in  
heaven lit.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

If I am Jack o' Lanthorn, sweet, a homeless  
thing am I,  
I cannot warm you but must see you cold until  
you die ;  
Will you not choose a homely hearth to sit and  
warm you by ?

You choose the wildfire none the less, you'll  
follow where I go ?  
Ah ! steadfast heart and sweet heart, made strong  
for me to know  
Although I go I will return, although I change  
and grow,

Or change and lessen, on your soul my wayward  
soul I stay,  
Your steady light my wandering light shall draw  
and feed and sway ;  
And I will love you, sweet, as long as Jack o'  
Lanthorn may.

## AN OLIVE LEAF

### AN OLIVE LEAF

I AM no rose kissed scarlet by the sun,  
Nor pale love-in-a-mist ;  
No violet that her purple web has spun,  
Dreaming of amethyst ;  
I am no hair-fern, beautiful and brief,  
But pale and wan I grow, an olive leaf.

Pale am I, scentless, grayish-green of leaf ;  
But pluck me—lay me in a hand where grief  
Has set her sigil in the hollow palm,  
Has set her sigil plain as spring has sealed  
The iris of all flowers in the field  
To be her herald when the windflowers yield  
To crowns-imperial and the spreading balm.

Set me, I say, in this one graven palm,  
And I shall change in all my fibres,—know  
All beauty to whose heights I dare to grow.  
My green shall deepen to an emerald glow,  
Redden to ruby, blush into a rose,



## DAYS AND NIGHTS

Yea, change and grow as passionately sweet  
As does syringa, dying with the beat  
Of the wild wings of those wild birds that nest  
In the warm whiteness of a woman's breast.

So shall I breathe, burn, bloom, and wither so  
Held in that hand—for whose love have I grown  
Here on my branch, a gray-green leaf alone ;  
To height of heart's desire reach up, and go  
Content, having known the best that I could  
know.

## A SLEEP SONG

O SLEEP, go, Sleep, hasten to my lover,  
Leave my eyelids all forlorn of thy quiet breath ;  
Where my love lies wakeful, go thou and lean over,  
Singing low, singing slow, dearest child of Death.  
Fair Sleep, rare Sleep, Death that is thy father,  
Night that is thy mother, both sow flowers for thee ;  
White poppies dashed with dew, drowsy flowers to  
gather,  
Yellow rose that silence saith to the busiest bee.

## THE DECADENT

Hear, Sleep, dear Sleep, ere my song be ended—  
Gather me thy fairest flowers a soft dream to make  
For my love—a dream of scent and of music blended.  
Ay, and let me kiss the dream for the dreamer's  
sake.

O Sleep, blow sleep-dust upon his pillow  
Till he dreams it is my breast, and to dream is fain ;  
Let him think it is my hair, not thy branch of willow,  
Dark against the little light through the rain-  
blurred pane.

## THE DECADENT

DULNESS, less comely than grief, has gone over  
my soul.

Sullen and sluggish its waters of bitterness roll ;  
It is naught to me now  
How the wind-stricken woods to the lash of the  
nor'-wester bow,  
How the bubbles are bright on the vanishing track  
of the vole,  
How beauty is writ on the world, as a legend is  
writ on a scroll.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

It is naught to me, drunken of dulness, an alien  
here,  
How the peoples are trodden of anger and sorrow  
and fear ;  
How lust on the shoulder of love has laid tremulous  
hand.

I am dull, I am slack ;  
And doubt goes before me, and following fast on  
my track  
A ghost I can hear stepping soft o'er the leaf-  
sodden land.

I am old, I am cold,  
I have trafficked for dreams in the markets where  
visions are sold ;  
I have bought me a dream, and the dream of my  
spirit takes toll,  
And of dreams I am sick.  
In the place of dead dreams, dead desires, I alone  
stand up, quick—  
Dulness, less comely than grief, has encompassed  
my soul.

## WINDS

### WINDS

THE wind came crying from the East ;  
And blew the churchyard-grass aside  
As if to read forgotten names.  
It tossed the very altar-flames,  
And like a mourning woman cried,  
Whose sorrow will not be denied :  
Then in the sea-caves sank and ceased.

The wind came singing from the West ;  
And through the formal gardens ranged,  
And suddenly they all were changed.  
He entered in the rose's breast,  
Like any bee, and, murmuring there,  
Sent a new music through the air :  
Then, in mid-sweetness, fell to rest.

The wind came shouting from the North ;  
As some armed warrior might come forth  
Eager to slay, or to be slain.  
He tore the last leaves from the tree  
And sped them shuddering o'er the plain ;  
He called to heel the angry sea,  
And lashed it with his scourge of rain.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

The wind came sighing from the South,  
His hair a cloud, a rose his mouth ;  
His eyes beneath the level brows  
Were shadowy as forest boughs ;  
His voice was like a song one hears  
In childhood, lost for many years,  
Heard first with laughter, last with tears.

## THE SEAWEED-GATHERERS

BESIDE the rocks that crumble, between the rocks  
that feed  
With drowned men the sea's hunger, we sailed to  
gather weed :  
We drew it up by armfuls out of the sea that clung  
To every sea-lace dripping with shell and sand  
sea-flung.

The time was near to sunset, the sky was clear of  
mist  
The wind among the cliff-caves was making dreary  
tryst ;

## THE SEAWEED-GATHERERS

But in our stern like sunset the wreaths of red  
weed were,

The green weed shone as silken as a sea-woman's hair.

She in the boat beside me who helped me gather  
store

Of seaweed green and rosy was fair and is no more ;  
Her eyes were like a seagull's, her neck was white  
as foam,

And I who sought but seaweed found love and  
brought her home.

The night is none so dreary as was the day to me,  
When wife and boat together came drifting in  
from sea ;

Alone she sought for seaweed, and when the storm  
came down,

The creatures of the seaweed alone beheld her  
drown.

I have no peace in sleeping, no comfort in the day,  
For if her grave is near me, her soul is far away.

But when a-seeking seaweed the kind death comes  
to me,

Church-earth will never keep her down if I lie in  
the sea.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

### SLEEP

“**SLEEP**, brother of Death, rise up and say  
What dost thou here in the churchyard-hay?  
Thy garland is torn and thy torch is out,  
On thy mouth is grief, in thine eyes is doubt.  
Have men upbraided and thrust thee away?”

Sleep said, “I have bridled and led the thunder,  
And held the pale horse in a leash of wonder.  
I have kept the seed of the fire alive,  
And many a broken flower bade thrive;  
But I and Joy, we must part asunder.

“For man has opened the bolted door;  
He has laughed in my face, and gone before  
Through fields forbidden; the shapes I knew  
He has called to heel; he has smitten through  
My dreams with the word that he dreams no more.

“Man laughs at all things, and will not weep.  
With leafy laughter he covers deep  
Dense coverts, where wild beasts lurk and lie,  
Afraid to spring when he passes by.  
Man says, ‘Dreams fail me: I will not sleep.’

## A WHITE NIGHT

“What shall I do, now my reign is o'er?  
Not Death my brother can now restore  
My ancient glory: 'tis man alone,  
Whose pain defies me, can heal my own.”  
Sleep knelt by a new grave, weeping sore.

## A WHITE NIGHT

WHITE stand the houses out in the moonless  
midnight.

Here and there a window lighted yet stands plain—  
Strange as a lifted eyelid in a face that slumbers—  
The wakefulness behind it, is it grief or sin or  
pain?

Cart on cart moves stealthily, feet on feet follow,  
Wheels plod on reluctantly, creaking as they go,  
A snatch of crazy song beats down a baby's crying—  
But over all and each the silence falls like snow.

All sounds flower slowly from the heart of silence,  
Not as in the daylight, shrieked at ears a-strain:



## DAYS AND NIGHTS

Harsh sounds come less harshly, and fade before  
they trouble

Ears that hear them come and go, and peace grow  
whole again.

One by one the fixed lights grow paler and grow  
fewer,

One by one man quenches what he lit ; the stars  
remain.

The gray sky whitens, with a shudder it is daylight,  
Cocks are crowing sleep away, and day brings rain.

## SUNSET

THERE'S green fire in the Easting, and red fire in  
the West,

The North and South are coloured like the plumes  
on a dove's breast ;

The wind's down, but the aspens take yet no  
thought of rest.

There's not a bird's nest in them, but endlessly  
they sway

Throughout the windless twilight as through the  
windy day,

## SUNSET

Though the rain stays for whose coming the  
poplar leaves turned gray.

The hill above us darkens with a crown of ash and  
oak,  
Its flanks are clothed with gorses, and upon its  
neck for yoke  
It wears the fallen elm-trees that the last thunder  
broke.

A gray stain to the southward tells of ships upon  
the sea :  
A cry from hidden coverts tells where the moor-  
hens be :  
A white flash in the grayness—the owl has left  
her tree.

The darkness narrows round us the lands that lay  
so wide—  
I cannot tell the ash-tree from the alder at her  
side ;  
Nor know the homeward way of these three roads  
that here divide,  
But for the lowing cows that come, slow-footed,  
down the ride.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

### DAWN

STREAK upon streak of turquoise in a sheet of  
heavy gray,  
A space of shining silver where the clouds are  
torn away,  
Stars growing pale in heaven o'erhead, and, lower  
down,  
A fringe of amber touches the roofs of the sleeping  
town.  
Shadowy wains and waggoners steal slow and  
softly by,  
There is no sudden swish of whips, there is no  
carter's cry.  
Upon the lips that cease from speech, the lids  
that fain would rest,  
A little wind comes whispering out of the lightless  
west.  
Lamps in the road are quenched and die because  
the day's begun,  
Although there's half an hour to wait ere men  
salute the sun.

## MOONRISE AT SUNSET

Steps of a homeless woman sound hollow down  
the street,  
Laugh of a man rings noisily where man and  
woman meet,  
And change with languid eyes and lips a fire of  
idle words,  
A cry of foolish laughter.

Then silence ; and the birds.

## MOONRISE AT SUNSET

THIN as a bubble, empty of light and listless,  
The moon rose pale, and the eastern sky was gray  
With the rain that had been, and away in the  
west, resistless,  
A crimson flood surged up where the dead sun lay.

The sun lay dead in a sea of fire, and splendid  
In death he took all light from the sky around ;  
His battle lost and won, and his day's race ended  
He lay, and the place of his death was holy  
ground.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

The sun lay dead, enwrapped in a shroud of splendour,  
The moon, his heir, arose in the pallid east ;  
Colourless, meek, she fronted the west to render  
Homage to that swift runner whose race had  
ceased.

Pale, she took light from the dead ; the pale clouds  
breasting,  
She gathered light as she rose with her face to  
the sun,  
Unhasting she went her way, she went unresting,  
And the west grew pale as the east, and the night  
was begun.

## THE EAST WIND

THE white wind of the South it blows from far away,  
The black wind of the North from the gates of  
Hell is driven,  
The gray wind of the West, maybe she blows from  
Heaven,  
But the red wind, the East wind's the wind of the  
judgment day.

## THE EAST WIND

The white wind and the gray wind they bring the  
kindly rain,  
The black wind and the gray wind they carry  
storm and snow ;  
But when the East wind's blowing, the sleeping  
dead they know  
By the breath upon their feet that 'tis time to rise  
again.

No ghost can wake from slumber when the North  
and West winds blow ;  
The dead lie still and stir not, in their yellowing  
cerecloths bound ;  
But when the East wind rustles the dead leaves  
above ground,  
It is the dead men's holiday, and back to earth  
they go.

They open close-sealed chambers, and they rustle  
up the stairs ;  
They enter hearts that know them and hearts that  
have forgot :  
They leave beside love's rosemary tear-wet forget-  
me-not,  
For the East's the wind of memory, and nothing  
else is theirs.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

### THE MOTH

LET the white moth go by,  
Because some wandering spirit it may be  
That loves the kindly earth so close and dear,  
It cannot break the bonds that keep it here.  
The day's for us and all the daylight cheer ;  
Twilight's for delicate things more glad than we.  
Moths have their right as well as birds to fly ;  
Let the white moth go by.

Let the white moth go by :  
It has a mate whose wings shine silverly  
Somewhere beneath the moonlight, calling it  
To join its airy dances, and to knit  
Two joys in one, for very full must be  
The little lives that two suns cannot see—  
Because we love our childhood, you and I,  
And would not let one delicate memory die,  
And know our kinship to all lives that are,  
To every dewdrop and each falling star—  
Let the white moth go by.

## THE MOON AND THE CLOUD

### THE MOON AND THE CLOUD

THE trees were full of voices ; the night was warm ;  
A white cloud shaped like an arm lay across the  
sky,

Stars hung over its wrist in a starry chain,  
And one star dropped and rushed down to dark-  
ness and death.

I leaned from my window and looked, and I drew  
quick breath,

For the moon was rising eastwards ; and lo, the  
Arm

Reached to the moon with fingers greedy to hold,  
To clutch as a miser does, though it could not  
harm

This pearl-white blossom, sickle-shaped, lightless,  
cold,

About whose folded petals the star-bees swarm.

The leaves talked on, and the breath of the night  
was balm ;

The moon rose up and lay in the open palm

And gathered light therefrom, and my fear was  
nought,



## DAYS AND NIGHTS

For the hand with menace and danger was nowise  
fraught.

Brighter and brighter it grew, and slowly rose,  
Growing bright and warm as a girl's face grows  
Turned to her lover. Slowly it gathered light  
From the holding hand, and out of the fingers  
white  
Slid, and shone free and alone in the whispering  
night.

## SHEEP IN A STORM

THE storm comes slowly up the skies,  
The valley in its shadow lies,  
Yet still a light as faint as hope  
Lies all along the sheep-trimmed slope  
And fain would save the distant tower  
From darkness yet another hour,  
But vainly from the tempest flies.

The herons from the marsh have gone,  
Beholding how the dark draws on,

## SUMMER HEAT

The beech-tree yonder on the hill,  
Where silly sheep are feeding still,  
'Twixt light and lightning shuddering stands,  
A landmark between alien lands—  
Each leaf aghast in the hot breath  
That whispers to all trees of death.

The sheep feed stolidly, nor know  
How near their heads the lightnings go.  
The old tower not more careless stands  
Of human wrath and human hands  
Than these meek things that without fear  
The lightnings see, the thunders hear,  
Nor cease from feeding to and fro.

## SUMMER HEAT

THE very flagstones of the street  
Are hot beneath the passers' feet,  
The languid lilies droop their heads,  
The pollen that the larkspur sheds  
Is heavy on the heavy bee,  
And dazed with too much light is he.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

The torch-flowers in the garden beds  
Have quenched their glowing golds and reds ;  
The swans are hidden in the reeds,  
And if Pan pipes no Dryad heeds.  
They all are sleeping in the brake—  
Sleeping so sound they will not wake  
For any goat-hoofed piper's sake.

The balsam snaps her wingèd seeds  
On every little wind that flies  
Listless beneath unshadowed skies.  
The heart of man is overweighed  
With brightness : he desires the shade  
And whispering waters lapsing down  
Towards the sea where all dreams fade  
In that green depth where sailors drown.

## BY THE SEA

OVER the western waters the clouds are edged  
with flame,  
Eastward hovers the darkness whence last the  
lightning came,

## BY THE SEA

There's a strange voice in the evening air, a  
strange breath from the sea,  
And far away in London my lover dreams of me.

The long streets close about him, the miles of  
brick and stone,  
His are the town-stained plane trees, wherein the  
wind makes moan,  
The creeper by his window drops down its yellow-  
ing leaves,  
And in its cage of wicker his neighbour's pigeon  
grieves.

Mine are the wild sea-swallows, the sparrow-hawk  
that towers,  
The mallow and the poppy, and all cliff-loving  
flowers.

Mine are the crimson seaweeds, and mine the  
long, gray downs,  
The sharp cliffs edged with umber, with chalk-  
weed for their crowns.

Our bodies that are severed have souls that cannot  
part,  
And in my beating bosom I feel my lover's heart,

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

Through eyes of mine he watches the storm that  
drifts away,

He hears as I am hearing the voices of the bay.

And while the slow wave lapses, and slowly comes  
again,

I hear as he is hearing the branches of the plane,  
I hear the pigeon crooning, and shed on him and  
me

There comes out of the sea-mist the comfort of  
the sea.

## A THUNDERSTORM

THE sea is full, and over-full,  
The waves are edged with foam like wool :  
Does Proteus shear his flocks to-night ?  
It seems so thick with fleeces white.

The sky is like a copper shield,  
Brought broken from a battle-field ;  
Between its rents the lightnings leap,  
Tryst with the meeting clouds to keep.

## THE SUNFLOWER

The wind cries like a child to-night :  
Its breath has turned the poplars white ;  
The ivy shudders on the wall,  
And petals of red lilies fall.

A moment, and the world is dumb :  
The moment ere the thunders come ;  
The earth holds breath 'twixt fear and pain,  
Then, childlike, floods her fear with rain.

## THE SUNFLOWER

THE Sunflower bows upon her breast  
Her golden head, and goes to rest,  
Forgetting all the days that were  
When she was young and proud and fair ;  
And in the glowing August air  
Bees came and sought and found her sweet.  
Now earth is cold about her feet,  
And wasps forsake her, and the sun  
No longer seeks her for the one  
Flower in his splendid image made.  
Her beauty's done, her farewell said.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

Her large leaves fold in weary wise,  
And heavy are her great brown eyes.  
The living rubies that would run  
Across her discs that mocked the sun—  
The ladybirds sleep, every one.  
The great stalk stoops towards the earth  
Where all dreams end, whence all have birth.  
The hive-bee has forgotten quite  
How once he loved her, for the night  
Has come wherein no bee can spy  
Sweets in this sunflower, dead and dry

## ON RYE HILL

GREEN meadows after the rainfall look like spring:  
We pass along them, lazily loitering.  
White flowers in the deep grass move at the touch  
of a white moth's wing:  
The cattle are still in the meadow, and high on  
the hill  
The sheep are still.

## ON RYE HILL

A robin sings in the hawthorn that leans so low  
Bowed by the weight of its haws, and the black-  
berries show

Delicate blossom, and fruit that deepens from red  
Into the perfect black, and the deep-thorned  
branches spread

Traps in the yellowing grass for the careless feet  
that fare

This way in the lover's twilight, and up from the  
alders there

A cloud of swallows rises and dances high in the  
air.

Bells leap up to us, following with chime upon  
chime

Us as we climb

Up past the alder coolness, the hazel screen.

Over us now no trees but the oaks stand green ;

Beautiful, steadfast, grave, they gather and stand

Guarding the dimpling land.

And far away where the girdle of oaks slips free—

Behold, the sea.



## DAYS AND NIGHTS

### COBWEBS

THE cobwebs late so finely spun  
By cunning spiders in the sun,  
Hang glimmering, fringed with shining rain.  
Round drops of molten silver form,  
Flash, fall, and slowly form again,  
The last, lost children of the storm.

All down the flowerless garden walk  
The cobwebs hang from stalk to stalk,  
Full-fringed with rain : the pink is knit  
To the tall rose that neighboured it  
When June was at her height of noon,  
And skies of evening knew no whit  
Of mist that wraps the hunter's moon.

The sunflower to the phlox is bound  
By silken chains of filmy stuff,  
Soft as the seed-sheaths underground  
Waiting till winter's skein is wound  
And Earth of frost has had enough.

## WEED-FIRES

Then rose and phlox and pink shall rise  
Unchained, that now with cobweb-ties,  
Unwilling neighbours, wait the pyre  
Of dead leaves and the cleansing fire.

## WEED-FIRES

Now every little garden holds a haze  
That tells of longer nights and shorter days :  
Handfuls of weeds and outcast garden-folk  
Yield up their lives and pass away in smoke.  
The leaves of dandelions, deeply notched,  
Burn with the thistle's purple plumes, unwatched  
Of any eyes that loved them yesterday—  
They light a sullen flare, and pass away.

The small fires whimper softly as they burn,  
They murmur at the hand that will not turn  
Back on the dial and bring to them again  
June's turquoise skies or April's diamond rain.  
"Alas," the weeds are crying as they smoulder,  
"We are grown wiser with our growing older ;  
We know what summer is—but ah ! we buy  
Knowledge too dear ; we know, because we die."

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

### AMERICANS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

THE poet's marble breast was full of roses,  
Red damask roses spilling heavy scent,  
Strange feet were echoing down the twilit closes,  
Where cloistered feet once went.

Strange lips were speaking names that we re-  
member,  
Lips of our kith and kin from oversea ;  
The wistful spendthrift sunshine of September  
Was full of memory.

The poets stood together, smiling, dreaming,  
Looking away to lands of hearts' desire,  
And over graven brasses there ran gleaming  
A finger shaped of fire.

A child drew back before the sudden raying,  
With hand held over his enchanted eyes,  
"Look where you put your foot," I heard him  
saying,  
"It's there that Gladstone lies."

## LOVE IN SEPTEMBER

The English poets smiled, though they were  
flowerless,

For round them flower-faces went and came,  
And for an afternoon old Time was powerless  
To make men fear his name.

America brought roses to her poet,  
Better than any heartsease gardens grow ;  
Roses full-blown, roses in bud, all know it,  
The secret Hiawatha could not know.

## LOVE IN SEPTEMBER

THE garden lay about us twain  
Hoarding its sweets up for the rain ;  
We clung together, you and I,  
And heard the minutes hurrying by.  
Heart against heart beat heavily,  
Your eyes through twilight sought for mine,  
My lips drank love from yours like wine.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

Our lips together met and clung—  
Our love stood beautiful and young  
And watched us while the minutes spun  
Webs of delight not yet undone,  
While our lips, kissing, would not part ;  
While all the night beat like a heart  
Fuller of fire than any sun ;  
And one great star and only one  
Above us for a lantern hung.

My hand in yours so closely lay,  
I felt your pulse beat like my own ;  
I breathed your breath, and in my brain  
The seed of your own thought was sown.  
The garden walls seemed far away,  
The scent of flowering mint was blown  
About us in the gloaming gray,  
About us as our lips clung close  
As flash and peal, as bee and rose.

But flash and peal and cloud were not.  
Twilight and scent for us begot  
Delicate dreams, and for our sake  
No bat, or buzzing chafer came  
The happy silences to break.

## ALL SOULS' EVE

We kissed, and to the lighted room  
Came, carrying with us like perfume  
As lovely as the rose's name,  
The memory of the twilight sweet  
In shining eyes and laggard feet.

## ALL SOULS' EVE

FROM sea-ooze and from river-bed, from church-  
yards old and new,  
The dead men rise and seek their own, and I, my  
dear, seek you.  
Against your hair, against your hand, my kissing  
lips I set :  
My heart beats on your heart again, Margaret.

O good it is to see old love re-lighted in your eyes,  
As we meet down by the river beneath October  
skies !

O good it is to touch your hand and know that  
you forget  
The grave-dust that has clogged my feet,  
Margaret !

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

I had not known you, too, were dead, my sweet,  
until to-day ;  
I wondered that no footstep came to strike fire  
through my clay.  
But glad I am to know no man will see Time's  
passing fret  
The pallid flower of your face, Margaret.

Did you think long as I thought long before  
our hands might meet,  
And are you glad as I am glad that here our  
wandering feet  
Are stayed that might have strayed so far afield,  
and never met  
On any kind November Eve, Margaret ?

And are you glad as I am glad that we have died  
so young,  
Before the May dew off my feet, the honey off  
your tongue  
Had died and dried ? And are you glad there is  
no period set  
To this, our loving after death, Margaret ?

## THE HALCYON DAYS

And are you glad the wan water rose to your  
lips, and sealed

You to be always fresh and fair as any flower in  
field ?

And are you glad the fever lit a fire no wind  
could fret

And burned my body unto death, Margaret ?

It is my soul that holds your soul, and not my  
hand of clay

That holds your hand, and from your hair wrings  
the cold dew away :

That feels old love alive again and knoweth no  
regret,

But blesses Death we died so young, Margaret.

## THE HALCYON DAYS

(MID-DECEMBER)

The Halcyon Days are drawing near,  
The strangest time of all the year,  
When, for a small bird's brooding sake,  
The gathered storm forbears to break ;



## DAYS AND NIGHTS

The north wind moves not on the deep,  
The east wind bows herself to sleep,  
And winter spares the water-ways,  
Because these are the halcyon's days.

But seven quiet days shall run  
Beneath calm airs and gentle sun,  
And then the halcyon's brood shall be  
Hatched out ; and earth and air and sea  
Shall feel the north wind and the east  
Blow sharp and snell on man and beast ;  
The nipping fingers of the frost  
Shall kill the flowers November tossed  
Out from her basket, to make cheer  
For the last days of the old year.

The Christmas rose shall grow more pale  
To hear the rattle of the hail,  
The holly all her prickles need  
To keep her berries safe indeed  
From thievish fingers of the wind.  
But we who sit beside the fire,  
Or trudge a-cold through fog and mire,  
Will keep awhile in grateful mind

## A CAROL

Those seven soft days when no storm stirred  
About a brooding mother-bird ;  
And will not carp at slippery ways,  
Remembering the Halcyon Days.

## A CAROL

News for all women, the serving, the sinning—  
Evil is dead and a new reign beginning :

To-day in a stable a maid brings to birth  
The desire of the ages, the hope of the earth.

Joshua prefigured Him, Eve, overthrown  
Lady of Eden, dreamed Him for her own.

Out of the darkness of nebulous things,  
Lo! He has come to be King of all kings,

Lord of all lords : and His throne is a manger ;  
Cattle feed by Him, the beautiful Stranger.

Servants He has not, His pleasure to do,  
His nurse is a peasant in mantle of blue ;

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

She holds Him so safe in the fold of her arm,  
No wind can creep thither to work to His harm ;

She gives Him her milk from a bountiful breast,  
She croons to the Godhead and rocks Him to rest.

Kings, principalities, angels, and powers,  
Come ye and look at this comfort of ours.

Light of the uttermost lands shall He be :  
Raise up the dead, tread the labouring sea ;

Fisher of men shall He be ere He dies—  
Now He but laughs through a baby's sweet eyes.

Laughing and sleeping a suckling lies He,  
Lord of the earth and the air and the sea.

## LAIS

SHE was the lightest woman in the land ;  
The homeless thistledown into your hand  
You might charm sooner, or the wildfire thrall,  
Than bring her wandering fancy to your call.

## MATER DOLOROSA

Some few possessed her : many more desired  
To keep and tame her, but no man grew tired  
Of this slight thing, more swift to come and go  
Than a bird's shadow flickering on the snow.

Her body's flower died, her soul went out :  
Poor little gilded taper, blown about  
By the great wind of Death—you were but meant  
To light some little room o'erbrimmed with scent.

Poor rose, whose last red leaves drop slowly down,  
Not to smell sweet again in wreath or crown—  
Mimosa, touched and killed by careless hands,  
God speed your scared soul in those lightless  
lands!

## MATER DOLOROSA

### A WINTER SONG

EARTH takes but little pleasure to remember—  
Being a widow now, that was a wife—  
How sweet May was, how bountiful September,  
What wayward music April's chanter blew.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS

Her leaping fires of life  
Burn down beneath the fall of frosty dew,  
And dwindle slowly to the last red ember  
That is December.

She knows not how it went, the Linus-song  
Whose burden the brown reapers bore along  
As they brought home the sheaves.  
Nay, though the thistle yielded figs, from thorn  
Though purple grapes were born,  
She would not wonder. She is past surprise ;  
The certainty of grief is in her eyes,  
And that she once was glad she scarce believes.

She dares not pray for summer to return.  
Against her eyelids burn  
The tears that fall not,—for what use are tears ?  
Above her head a naked plane-tree rears  
Wild arms of all despair,  
Reaching out blindly through the frosty air  
For its beloved leaves that rotting lie  
Where Winter with his *ménie* has passed by.

Under the touch of their empoisoned spears,  
The fair and gallant wood

## MATER DOLOROSA

That all the summer-time green-coated stood,  
Stands naked to the bone, and wrings its hands  
Above the altered lands.

Earth watches while her little children die,  
The frozen wasp, the starving butterfly—  
She has no tears for them, but in her heart  
Knife-edged the Seven Sorrows wake and start.



# THE UNDYING ONES





## HERTHA

I AM the spirit of all that lives,  
Labours and loses and forgives :  
My breath's the wind among the reeds,  
I'm wounded when a birch-tree bleeds.  
I am the clay nest 'neath the eaves  
And the young life wherewith it brims,  
The silver minnow where it swims  
Under a roof of lily-leaves  
Beats with my pulses ; from my eyes  
The violet gathered amethyst ;  
I am the rose of winter skies,  
The moonlight conquering the mist.

I am the bird the falcon strikes,  
My strength is in the kestrel's wing,  
My cruelty is in the shrikes.  
My pity bids the dock leaves grow  
Large, that a little child may know

## THE UNDYING ONES

Where he shall heal the nettle's sting.  
I am the snowdrop and the snow,  
Dead amber, and the living fir—  
The corn-sheaf and the harvester.

My craft is breathed into the fox  
When, a red cub, he snarls and plays  
With his red vixen. Yea, I am  
The wolf, the hunter, and the lamb ;  
I am the slayer and the slain,  
The thought new-shapen in the brain.  
I am the ageless strength of rocks ;  
The weakness that is all a grace,  
Being the weakness of a flower.  
The secret on the dead man's face  
Written in his last living hour.  
The endless trouble of the seas  
That fret and struggle with the shore,  
Strive and are striven with evermore—  
The changeless beauty that they wear  
Through all their changes ; all of these  
Are mine. The brazen streets of hell  
I know, and heaven's gold ways as well.  
Mortality, eternity,  
Change, death, and life are mine—are me.

## THE SHEPHERD OF THE SEA

### THE SHEPHERD OF THE SEA

I AM a mighty shepherd, and many are my flocks ;  
I lead them, I feed them among the weedy rocks.  
My shepherd's crook is fashioned out of a Norway  
    pine,  
And there's no sheep-dog in the world will herd  
    these flocks of mine.

My fold is wide, and day and night the walls shift  
    of my fold,  
No upland, no lowland my lambing ewes withhold  
From the cry of their shepherd, the beckoning of  
    his hand ;  
For my own desert places they leave the pasture-  
    land.

With wild white fleeces surging about me to my  
    knee,  
I go about my herding, the Shepherd of the Sea ;  
I call to the rock-pastures the white sheep of the  
    waves,  
For they but find their grazing where sailors find  
    their graves.

## THE UNDYING ONES

I am a mighty shepherd, and mighty flocks have I ;  
I lead them, I feed them while stars are in the sky ;  
And when the moon is waning on sheltered shore  
and lee,  
I rest not nor slumber, the Shepherd of the Sea.

## THE PIPER

THE Piper comes and the Piper goes,  
His pipe is carven of willow-wood,  
One tune of it changes our beating blood  
To water : another tune he blows  
And fire's in our feet, but no man knows  
If sad or glad be the Piper's mood.

He plants sweet grapes and he gathers sloes,  
Uproots the cherry, and leaves the weed,  
Leans on a spear, though his hand must bleed,  
And loveless ever mid lovers goes,  
Though all hearths listen for him, he knows,  
And covered for him is the fire's red seed.

## TEZCATLIPOCA

The Piper's eyes are as deep as the sea,  
Sea-gray, sea-green: and what man can tell  
That meets his eyes if 'tis ill or well  
To look and forget, or remember and be  
For ever under the Piper's spell,  
Swayed by him as a wind-swayed tree?

Over the world the red wind blows,  
Darkens the sea and veils the sun,  
The Piper under the twilight goes  
And shepherds our wandering wills as one:  
The web of our thoughts is by him undone.  
Who leads the Piper there's no one knows.

## TEZCATLIPOCA<sup>1</sup>

(THE MOCKER)

Of old they called me Mocker. Those I mocked  
Lie with dumb lips and eyelids sealed with night,  
Upon their souls to-day I have no might,

<sup>1</sup> In the Aztec mythology Tezcatlipoca, the Night Wind, was also the Mocker, the Youth who never grew old, and Death himself.

## THE UNDYING ONES

And all the doors my laughter burst are locked.  
Men's sheaves of shame by their own hands are  
shocked,

And little for my mockery I glean,  
Although my laugh is heard, my shadow seen  
Wherever graves are dug or cradles rocked.  
Shorn am I of some splendour day by day,  
Robbed of some terror every night that falls.  
I can make towers rock and crumble walls  
And pluck the seed of life out of the clay,  
But on man's fear my heart may no more feed ;  
I, once man's Mocker—I am mocked indeed.

## THE PEOPLE OF THE DEW

If you can rokker Romany  
And wish the gipsy well,  
Come tramp the fern beside me  
Up hill and over fell.  
I'll show you where the deadwort grows,  
Where witchbells cluster blue,  
And where the foxgloves ring at night  
For People of the Dew.

## THE PEOPLE OF THE DEW

They're wayward folk and wandering  
And wastrel folk as we—  
They take their gear where'er it comes,  
They love no walls to see.  
They milk the kye and scare the birds,  
A gay and idle crew—  
And spæ the stars like Romanies,  
The People of the Dew.

Like us, they come from far away,  
Like us, must wander far ;  
Their kin is Jack o' Lanthorn  
And every falling star.  
They're of the water and the wind,  
And of the fixed earth, you :  
But nought can stay and nought affray  
The People of the Dew.

Whoever hears them singing  
Will love no other song.  
Whoever sees them dancing,  
Must rise and tramp along,  
And take the highway for his path  
Winter and summer through,  
And follow, follow till he finds  
The People of the Dew.



## THE UNDYING ONES

They're hiding in the elder-tree,  
And in the bracken brown,  
And one will go in tattered rags,  
One in a silken gown.  
But you may know them by their eyes,  
That sorrow never knew,  
They've looked on life and looked past death,  
The People of the Dew.

## KATHALEEN NY-HOULAHAN

O KATHALEEN NY-HOULAHAN, your face is like a  
star,  
Your face has led me to your feet o'er wastes and  
waters far;  
Your face has made a day for me where only  
twilights are,  
O Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan, my star!  
O Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan, why loved I aught  
but you?  
I took a woman to my wife, and kind she was and  
true,

## KATHALEEN NY-HOULAHAN

But your gray eyes shone out on me within her  
eyes of blue,  
And, Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan, my soul went after  
you.

O Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan, it's old I am and gray,  
I see the dead leaves blown about the closing of  
my day ;  
The dead leaves, the red leaves, are rotting in my  
way,  
O Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan, to-day.

O Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan, my Eily's grave is green,  
And I've grown old a-seeking your face through  
tears and teen ;  
I'll turn my feet from this strait path, where your  
white feet have been  
And turned the dry ferns young again and green.

I'll turn my feet from every path but one—the  
churchyard way :  
I'll shut my eyes to every star, and sleep my fill  
till day ;  
'Tis Eily will awake me, and you it is will say  
" Rise up, play up, old piper, 'tis the dawning of  
the day."

## THE UNDYING ONES

### THE SHORT CUT TO ROSSES

By the short cut to Rosses a fairy girl I met,  
I was taken in her beauty as a fish is in a net.  
The fern uncurled to look at her, so very fair was she,  
With her hair as bright as seaweed new-drawn  
from out the sea.

By the short cut to Rosses ('twas on the first of May)  
I heard the fairies piping, and they piped my  
heart away ;  
They piped till I was mad with joy, but when I  
was alone  
I found my heart was piped away and in my breast  
a stone.

By the short cut to Rosses 'tis I'll go never more,  
Lest she should also steal my soul that stole my  
heart before,  
Lest she take my soul and crush it like a dead  
leaf in her hand,  
For the short cut to Rosses is the way to Fairyland.

## DIRGE FOR PRINCE ART

## DIRGE FOR PRINCE ART

(DESIRED BY THE FAIRIES, AND BEING COLD TO  
THEM, SLAIN BY AN ELF-BOLT)

WHITE of skin and brown of hair,  
Here he lies who has done with care.  
Goibnu's feast called long for him,  
Manan's guests made a song for him.

He who eats at Goibnu's feast  
May not be hurt by man or beast ;  
He who listens to Manan's song  
Hears no other his whole life long.

Manan's guests, and Goibnu's kin,  
All in vain they called him in.  
Naught he heeded the merrows' call,  
Though soft they sang to him one and all.

Naught he heeded of charm or spell,  
Holy thorn-tree or haunted well ;  
Naught he heeded of sowlth or shee,  
Or fruit that grew on the quicken-tree.

## THE UNDYING ONES

Wandering signs in the sky he knew,  
Magic of moonlight, rain and dew :  
Turned his steps not for foul or fair,  
Long though they for his soul set snare.

Neither has won him. Here he lies  
Sleeping under the wakeful skies.  
The stars behold him, the wind has ears—  
Ah! but he neither sees nor hears.

Call to him, cry to him, wind and rain,  
Breath of the clover, o'er him again  
Pass and tarry, if he should wake :  
Earth, be moved for his sleeping sake !

Here's the beauty we thought to win,  
And the light is quenched that shone bright within  
Here's the body we loved and slew :  
Art, but where is the soul of you ?

Cover softly the quiet face,  
Leaves are thick in his sleeping-place.  
The soul of him goes far and free  
And the body's left to the Lianan-sidhe.



## THE UNDYING ONES

To guess a Pixy works beside you—  
You of your wisdom overweening.

I only of my wayward clan  
Accept the food and wage of man :  
I labour in your fields all day,  
Whence my own folk have fled away.  
No voices call me to the moor  
When at the noon the heat grows sore—  
I bear my burden as I can.

My fairy birthright I have lost ;  
And yet I never grudge the cost,  
Because of one who gleans beside me,  
Whose cloud of russet hair shall hide me  
From Sorrow, who goes seeking ever  
For hearts to break and lives to sever.  
The running brooks for her I crossed :

Thresholds of human homes I passed,  
My lot among you mortals cast,  
Because a gleaner's eyes were kind,  
A gleaner's voice rang down the wind  
Like a bird's music, lost in leaves.  
I'll bind a whole green shire of sheaves  
If she will love me at the last.

## A DEVONSHIRE SONG

### A DEVONSHIRE SONG

**RICH** is the red earth country and fair beneath the  
sun

Her orchards in their whiteness show when April  
waters run ;

Fair show they in their autumn green when red  
their apples glow,

And yet a lovelier country is that I'm wisht to know.

The country has no borders, the country has no  
name ;

Its people are as homeless as any marish-flame ;  
But kind they are, and beautiful, and in their  
golden eyes

Their lovers see the gleam that drew out Eve  
from Paradise.

O happy Pixy-people that dance and pass away,  
That hope not for to-morrow nor grieve for  
yesterday,

O happy Pixy-people, would that I went with you,  
The way the red leaves travel when the harvest  
moon is new.



## THE UNDYING ONES

You fear no blight in summer that kills the growing corn,  
Your hearts have never sunk to see the sun rise red at morn,  
The brown spate in the river, the drowned face in the Dart  
Have never dimmed a Pixy's eye or hurt a Pixy's heart.

But I have seen the river rise and draw my lover down ;  
And since the Dart has shrunken too low to let me drown,  
And be at peace beside him, why I would lose this soul  
That makes the daylight dusk to me, since last Dart took her toll.

Oh Pixies, take this heavy soul and make me light as you,  
I care not though one day I pass away like drying dew—  
I only care to sleep no more, to dream no more, but go  
Far from the red earth country, and the cruel streams I know . .

## MAY MAGIC

### MAY MAGIC

WE three went out together—  
Margery, Maud, and I,  
In April's last soft weather,  
Ere the May dawn drew nigh.  
We washed our faces in May-dew,  
And saw the moon fade in the blue  
Waste highlands of the sky.

We maids went out a-Maying,  
To seek what we could find,  
And fairy pipes were playing  
Before us and behind.  
We could not see the Pixy-folk,  
Nor hear the mocking words they spoke,  
For blowing of the wind.

Maud found a black lamb straying,  
And took the sheepfold way,  
Margery went a-Maying  
Sullen, but came back gay,

## THE UNDYING ONES

Because she found an amber comb.  
*She* took a fairy treasure home ;  
I only brought home may.

When in her yellow tresses  
The amber comb we see,  
Wives curse, and no man blesses  
This maid called Margery.  
Her beauty is a hunter's snare,  
Men's souls are netted in her hair  
And cannot come forth free.

We three heard pixies blowing  
Their pipes ; two of the three  
Can hear the long grass growing,  
The winter wind can see.  
Maud's in her grave, nor cares nor knows  
Whether the stray lamb comes or goes,  
And I am as a folded rose  
Till a Pixy gather me.

## THE PIXIES

### THE PIXIES

HAVE e'er you seen the Pixies, the folk not blest  
or banned?

They walk upon the waters, they sail upon the  
land,

They make the green grass greener where'er their  
footsteps fall,

The wildest hind in the forest comes at their call.

They steal from bolted linneys, they milk the kye  
at grass,

The maids are kissed a-milking, and no one hears  
them pass.

They flit from byre to stable and ride unbroken  
foals,

They seek out human lovers to win them souls.

The Pixies know no sorrow, the Pixies feel no fear,  
They take no care for harvest or seedtime of the  
year;

Age lays no finger on them, the reaper time goes  
by

The Pixies, they who change not, grow old or die.

## THE UNDYING ONES

The Pixies, though they love us, behold us pass  
away,  
And are not sad for flowers they gathered  
yesterday,  
To-day has crimson foxglove, if purple hose-in-hose  
Withered last night. To-morrow will have its  
rose.

# SONGS OF JAPAN



## UMÉ!

UMÉ, Flower-o'-the-Plum,  
Out from your shadows come :  
Round roofs the swallows say,  
“ Winter was yesterday,  
Spring is to-morrow.”  
Come, heal my sorrow  
That winter-long went dumb :  
Come to me, come,  
    Umé, Flower-o'-the-Plum !

Umé, Flower-o'-the-Plum,  
Into the garden come ;  
Little green leaves unclose  
In promise of a rose,  
A green sword seeks the light  
Where lilies will be white ;  
    But my heart flowerless goes.



## SONGS OF JAPAN

Umé, Flower-o'-the-Plum,  
Waken and rise and come.  
The little seeds grow great for you,  
The buried blossoms wait for you :  
The rain-doors open stand—  
Early I watch and late for you  
    Since flower-time is at hand.

Umé, Flower-o'-the-Plum,  
'Tis that you will not come.  
Roots of the weeping willow  
You've chosen for your pillow  
Rather than this my breast.  
Then let me be your guest,  
Be blind like you and dumb,  
Near you take root and rest,  
    Umé, Flower-o'-the-Plum !

## LITTLE WILD INDIGO

LITTLE Wild Indigo sings and dances  
Like a fountain falling, a rush wind-blown.  
She is light as a bird and straight as a lance is,  
Brighter than fire are her black eyes' glances,  
Her mouth is a rose and her heart a stone ;

## LITTLE WILD INDIGO

But her kiss is sweet, and a thousand chances  
A man would face, if beyond the dim  
Edge of the star that as Earth is known  
Little Wild Indigo waited him.

She dwells at the sign of the Flowering Cherry,  
She serves all comers with cups of wine ;  
Her mouth is sad and her eyes are merry,  
And all desire her, and none divine  
If that hid soul is a clear gray lake,  
Or a mountain hollow the earth-fires shake,  
A flower mud-rooted, a broken shrine,  
Or a tree by the wayside whose bud and berry  
All idle hands in the world may take.

She is whiter than foam, she is slighter far  
Than gossamer caught in the hedgerow's net ;  
She was born in grief 'neath an evil star,  
And the mark of sin on her soul is set.  
But whoso sees her will not forget,  
And whoso loves her will sorrow long,  
And labour sadly, and travel far,  
Ere out of his dreams departs this face  
Of a lily grown in a miry place—  
This wildflower, trodden where dancers throng.

## SONGS OF JAPAN

### THE WOMAN WITH NINE SOULS

THE Gods that give and undo and withhold and  
gather,  
The Gods that darkened the lamp in my father's  
shrine,  
The Gods that lighted their flame in the heart of  
my father,  
Gave, for the greatening of grief, to this body of  
mine—

Souls that are nine.

Soul of the water of tears, soul of sea-water,  
Soul of an earth-clod, soul of the fire divine,  
Souls of hope, and fear, and desire, hope's daughter,  
Soul of a flower, and soul of the crystal fine—

My souls are nine.

My flower-soul laughs when Spring brings flowers  
to the cherry,  
My sea-soul burns when the sun turns the sea to  
wine,  
My soul of earth in the season of harvest's merry ;  
But how shall I comfort the sorrowful souls of mine ?

My souls are nine.

## A GEISHA SONG

How shall I turn my maiden heart to a lover ?  
My fire-soul seeketh a fire-soul to be mine ;  
Then my desire with water of tears brims over,  
And all my life lies waste like a broken shrine :  
My souls are nine.

Ah ! gods too lavish, great gods of the lord my  
father,  
Undo your gift that has marred my life's design  
With too much colour. Undo it, or slay me rather,  
For I at the wind's will sway, and no love is mine  
Whose souls are nine.

## A GEISHA SONG

At the sign of the Beckoning Kitten  
We geishas dwell ;  
Over our doorway is written  
" Hail and farewell."  
Broad is our gateway and litten,  
Full of sounds as a shell and bright as a star,  
That all men passing and pausing may surely tell  
Here lightness and laughter are.

## SONGS OF JAPAN

Than the foam of the sea we are lighter ;  
    No souls have we  
To lose, or to wane, or grow brighter  
    (Thus say the women that hear us, the men  
    that see).  
We laugh, though our way be wending,  
    Plain to all sight  
Deathwards—away from delight ;  
We laugh, though our world be ending  
    This very night.

We dance on the edge of sorrow ;  
    We make our song  
Of yesterday's roses tied with a knotted thong,  
Of joy that shall end to-morrow—  
    Joy lasts not long.  
    But grief is enduring, and wrong,  
That man from his evil may borrow  
    Strength, and be strong.

We are harps by strange fingers smitten,  
    Broken, and soon cast by ;  
Cups emptied of wine, and dry.  
We are lamps in the doorway litten  
    And the dawn draws nigh.

## JIZO

Soon is our story written  
Who dance—and die—  
At the sign of the Beckoning Kitten ;  
Hail and good-bye.

## JIZO

THE kindest God that ever came  
Out of calm heaven to troubled earth  
Is Jizo, who compassionates  
Not only those through temple gates  
That pass and pray, but pity gives  
To every striving soul that lives.  
He is more beautiful than day,  
And he is purer than a flame.  
He will not turn his eyes away  
When Life and Death are met at birth.

He is the God of pilgrims, seen  
On every road where pilgrims fare,  
Toiling to find some blessed goal  
Where peace is shed on every soul.

## SONGS OF JAPAN

He counts all weary feet that run  
Towards the slow-declining sun,  
Or stumble East after some dawn  
Long since departed, when the stars  
Sang morning songs, and fox and fawn  
Came out to hear, and were not slain :  
Jizo remembers such a strain.

He is the opener of all bars,  
The breaker of the heaviest chain.  
He lays his hand on raven hair  
And it shall never fade again ;  
Though Time holds Iris-flower in scorn,  
She in the Under-World shall wear  
The bloom and colour of her youth :  
The fair illusion made a truth  
By Jizo's touch that lingers there,  
When tawny-flowered chrysanthemum  
No more in season due shall come.

To Jizo's arms and bosom run  
All children of whatever mood,  
Wistful or wilful, bad or good :  
He shelters them from sun and storm,  
Shepherds them all, and hushes all

## A JAPANESE DANCER

To sleep when twilight shadows fall,  
And, in the refuge of his breast,  
Mothers bereft shall find at rest  
The wandering children that they mourn :  
The smallest and the weakest one  
Lies in his bosom, safe and warm.

## A JAPANESE DANCER

With woven paces and waving hands,  
Curtseys low as the dance demands,  
With foreign graces and woven paces,—  
Waving sleeves and fluttering fan,  
Mouth like a rose the south wind knows,  
Eyes and brows of curving jet,  
Amber pins for a coronet,  
On hair dead-black wherein doth show  
Blossoms of wild indigo :  
The dancing-woman of old Japan  
Moves as light as a flower can—  
This siren out of Eastern lands  
With woven paces and waving hands.



## SONGS OF JAPAN

She is the fairest, frailest thing  
The unchanging Orient can wring  
Out of its ageless youth.  
She is the naked Truth,  
The Ancient Evil, and she is  
The heart of all antiques mysteries.  
She passes like the wind  
O'er water, leaving not a trace behind.  
Her sisters are the cherry-flowers that snow  
Trees in mid-April. Silken apple-blow  
Is stable and strong  
Beside her. But she sings a deathless song.  
She, grass cut down, a flower that withers, she  
That cannot keep but can so wisely kiss—  
Her roots are set beside the wisdom-tree.

## THE PRAYER OF RUNNING WATER

(A JAPANESE LEGEND)

HEAR the Prayer of Running Water,  
Kindly son or loving daughter !

## THE PRAYER OF RUNNING WATER

I who lie in this small space  
Never saw my baby's face :

I who lie here all unshriven  
May not enter hell or heaven.

Near my grave there runs a spring,  
Ivies near it clasp and cling,

Cling and clasp above the water,  
As I fain would clasp my daughter.

Near the spring my mourners left  
Little cloth of finest weft,

Little cup of crystal fine  
Never yet brimmed up with wine.

Fill the cup with water sweet,  
On the linen sprinkle it :

When the linen wears in two,  
All my pains are struggled through,

When these tokens twain be cloven,  
Crystal cup and linen woven,

I who lost, shall find my daughter—  
Hear the Prayer of Running Water.



## TRANSLATIONS

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## HOROSCOPES

(FROM FRANÇOIS COPPÉE)

BEFORE the sibyl with her haunted eyes  
Two sisters sat with delicate arms enlaced ;  
Watched as she dealt the cards, and, without haste,  
Spelt out the rune of their two destinies.

Brown-haired and gold-haired, fresher than the  
dawn,

Poppy and white anemone were they ;  
A flower of autumn and a flower of May—  
They watched to see their fates from darkness  
drawn.

“ Life will be sad for you and yours, heigho ! ”  
The sibyl told the autumn-coloured maid.  
“ *But will my lover love me ?* ” “ Ay,” she said,  
“ *Why, then I shall be all too happy so.* ”

## TRANSLATIONS

“With earthly love you never shall be fed,”  
The sibyl told the lady white as snow.  
“*But shall I love at all?*” “Ay, even so.”  
“*Then happy I shall live and die,*” she said.

### THE CRUCIFIED LILY

(FROM CATULLE MENDES)

I CRUCIFIED a Lily on a rood  
In some dark dream or brooding fever mood.  
I took a branch and set it in the ground ;  
Another branch with ivy twine I bound  
For crosspiece to it, and thereon I slew  
The fairest Lily that my garden grew.

Hammer and nails a passion flower gave up  
From the green calyx of her mystic cup,  
Above the Lily buzzed a honey-bee,  
And slimy creatures came up stealthily  
From the leaf-sodden earth and creviced walls—  
The slug that leaves strange writings where it crawls,

## THE CRUCIFIED LILY

The fat old toad that chilly poison spews,  
Venomous things and blind, of wicked use  
And wicked will, came hurrying to the tryst,  
And round the dying Lily spat and hissed.  
And at the cross's foot, where mosses spread,  
Snails drank the sweet tears that the Lily shed.

I took a pointed thorn from out the hedge,  
And 'gainst the dying Lily set its edge ;  
The flower's head drooped low as if he swooned,  
But the white flesh showed neither spot nor  
wound,  
And, sore afraid, I heard the hovering bee  
Bring comfort to the Lily spite of me.

“ He that has drawn slow death upon thine head,  
Shall bleed for thee as thou hast never bled,  
Shall bleed for ever.” And in truth I see  
Within my heart a thorn that pierces me  
With pain unending ; through these many years  
I wash my crime away in bloody tears.



## TRANSLATIONS

### SOLITUDE

(FROM FRANÇOIS COPPÉE)

I KNOW a church, a place of evil savour ;  
—They hanged a priest there long ago, 'tis said—  
And none now folds the hands and bows the head  
Where once so many faithful souls found favour.  
The altar stripped of candles and of cross  
Forgets the music once around it swelling :  
In the deserted aisles leaves have their dwelling,  
Dead leaves that rough winds hunt and tear and  
toss.

My conscience is just such a shameful shrine  
Where, like dead leaves, my dry remorse blow,  
Whipped by the wind of doubt that scourges me.  
Obstinate but not steadfast, I am he  
Who cannot shelter his sick soul below  
The overshadowing arms of the Divine.

## THE ALCHEMY OF SADNESS

### THE ALCHEMY OF SADNESS

(FROM CHARLES BAUDELAIRE)

ONE lights the world with his delight,  
One drapes all nature in his woe :  
The hand which points one to the night,  
The other's way to joy doth show.  
Thou unknown Hermes, whom I fear  
Even while thy guiding hand assists,  
Like Midas, thou hast made me here  
The saddest of all alchemists.  
I change through thee my gold to lead,  
And heaven the reek of hell assumes,  
And in a winding-sheet of shadows,  
Lo, I have wrapped my dearest dead.  
Even in the midst of Eden's meadows  
I build my memories into tombs.

## TRANSLATIONS

### THE TULIP

(FROM FRANÇOIS COPPÉE)

RARE and luxurious flower, here you stand  
Arrayed for triumph, as you stood of old  
When, strange and splendid, in an Infanta's hand  
Velasquez set your silver and scarlet and gold.

What is this grudging love that makes of you  
Mistress and slave at once, like Hector's wife ?  
In this warm treasure-chamber scented through  
You sicken for the outside airs of life ;

For your free sisters in the great parks growing,  
The stately bowling-greens, the fountains' flowing,  
And overshadowing leafage of the plane :  
For all the rains sweep and the sun laughs over.  
A burgher of Haarlem's your only lover—  
Scentless sultana, you have lived in vain.

## THE CRACKED BELL

## THE CRACKED BELL

(FROM CHARLES BAUDELAIRE)

'Tis bittersweet o' wintry nights and days  
A fire of throbbing logs to loiter near,  
And watch while faint old memories appear  
Called up by chimes that sing amid the haze.

Some church-bell calls with lusty lungs and clear,  
For all its many years unspoiled, unspent,  
Like some old soldier watching by his tent,  
The password crying out for all to hear.

But *my* soul's bell is cracked, and when she fain  
Would fill with song the cold white evening skies,  
Her weak voice rattles and falls dumb again,  
Like some poor soldier wounded unto death  
Beneath a heap of dead, gasping for breath,  
Who, in the effort, breaks his heart and dies.

## TRANSLATIONS

### JACK O' LANTHORN

(FROM FRANÇOIS COPPÉE)

ON stormy nights and under lowering skies  
The peasant, taking home a weary load  
Of cares and branches, on the rain-drenched road  
Meets Jack o' Lanthorn, with his evil eyes.  
If he should follow, laying down his sheaf,  
The wildfire turns and flies, and in the bushes,  
Wherethrough each day the shouldering sea-wind  
pushes,  
Shines, like a lighted buoy beside a reef.  
But if *he* flies, afraid, and looks behind,  
He sees, pursuing, the unholy light  
Following his feet, staring with evil eyes.  
Even so Desire doth follow me in flight,  
And flies me when to follow I've a mind.  
When will it fade? when will the sun arise?

## THE GHOST

## THE GHOST

(FROM CHARLES BAUDELAIRE)

SOFT-EYED angels from the sky  
Shall not tread more light than I  
When I seek your bedside white  
Through the shadows of the night.

Dark and dear one, this my kiss  
Colder than the moonlight is ;  
And I clasp you, as a snake  
Curls about a leafless stake.

When the moon lifts livid face  
You shall feel my empty place  
Chill beside your own, my dear.  
Others on your heart shall play  
Easy tunes the livelong day ;  
I, at night, shall rule your fear.

## TRANSLATIONS

### HEINE

(FROM JUSTE OLIVIER)

HEINE, mocking gods and men,  
Died nerve by nerve for ten long years.  
With Irony's slim willow-rods  
He fought Pain and her poisoned spears.  
All passed by him, men and gods.  
But one day he bowed his head,  
Put the rods of willow by ;  
" No more laughter now," he said ;  
" It is time to die."

# CHILDREN OF THE YEAR





## JANUARY

**MINE** is the Christmas rose,  
The palest and the coldest flower earth knows.  
On the high hills where heather will be growing  
I set the north wind blowing,  
And launch upon the plain an avalanche of snows.

I am most strong, most weak.  
Vengeance upon the valley I can wreak,  
But I can make no crocus break its bud.  
I load with crystal chains the mountain flood,  
But vainly on the lake for lily-buds I seek.

I am a hunter born.  
The glowing hearths of short-lived men I scorn ;  
I cannot build, but I can break asunder.  
Yet I must stand aghast in awful wonder,  
Seeing renewed each day the red flower of the  
morn.

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

### JANUARY ROSES

RED roses in the winter sky  
At sunset showing,  
Where half is gray and half is blue ;  
There are no fairer flowers than you,  
And none more sweet and none more dear  
On any earthly rose-tree growing.

But why  
So quick to flower, so quick to die—  
Red roses of the winter sky ?

The rose that flowers when June is here,  
And storms and snowing  
Are past, and winter's out of reach,  
A strange word of an alien speech—  
The rose that comes when trees forget  
The mist that clogs, the frosts that fret,  
And that time is towards winter going ;  
This rose  
Is not more beautiful than those  
That January at sunset shows.

## A YEAR AGO

## A YEAR AGO

A YEAR ago a Voice spoke to the Queen,  
" Rise up, no more on mortal shoulders lean  
The burden of your age.  
Here is the end of every palmer's quest,  
The certain goal of every pilgrimage.  
Have no more memory of tears and teen :  
I bid you enter in your heritage  
Of peace, your crowned head stoop beneath this  
door,  
Where you shall find the lover gone before.

" After all bridal smiles and widowed tears,  
The river that has flowed for eighty years  
Now brings you into safest harbourage,  
Where is no rumour of the troubled sea,  
No memory of grief that used to be  
Your cup-mate and your bed-mate, every day  
And every night while your brown hair waxed gray,  
And your hurt soul grew weary of its clay.

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

“ A hand beloved shall set upon your hair  
A lighter crown than England's, and more fair.  
The daughter of your love yearns for your face,  
Two sons await you at the trysting-place.  
But more than all, there waits and calls to you  
    The husband and the lover that you knew.  
No more the burden of the day endure,  
This is the place of 'deadly woundës' cure,'  
Where you have come at last,  
The travail and the toil of queenship past.  
Put off your heavy years, put on your youth,  
And take those fairest dreams that are all truth ;  
They are the garland that the wife shall wear  
As she goes hurrying to her husband's breast,  
At last to be at rest,  
There where your heart for all these years has  
    been,”  
The Voice out of the night spoke no more to the  
    Queen.

## FEBRUARY

### FEBRUARY

I do not know what roses are,  
Hepatica's my only star,  
Set deep in winter-bitten grass ;  
There is no bird will pause and pass  
Along the leafless way I go :  
About my feet the snowdrops mass—  
The only flowers as cold as snow.

I may not ever take delight  
In sorrels red or woodruffs white ;  
The lily's cup shall never be  
Filled up with golden dew for me.  
The hailstones rest upon my hair  
Instead of pearls, and not a tree  
Shall tell its fruit that I was fair.

The eldest daughter of the year,  
I am not crowned of hope or fear,  
Though sharpest thorn-prick I would brook  
If on the rose I might but look—  
I have no rose, I have no thorn.

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

I do but write in the year's book  
A word of doubt, then go my way,  
A twilit dream denied of morn,  
A dawn-cloud blown away by day.

## A FEBRUARY DAY

THE birds were crying by the lake  
That Winter's chain would never break ;  
On brittle ice the seagulls slid,  
And under leaves and mould was hid  
The secret that will take the air  
With sudden sweetness everywhere,  
Proclaimed by daffodils with might  
From trumpet-flowers of gold and white.

Along the edges of the grass,  
And in the ruts where cart-wheels pass  
A border of unmelted snow  
Lay, that the Spring herself might know  
'Twas not yet time for her to keep  
Tryst with the blossoms still asleep,

## A FEBRUARY DAY

To wake the squirrel in his hole,  
From chrysalid to call the soul.

Tall rods of winter jasmine stood  
Naked of leaves, but glad of mood ;  
Covered with golden flowers for sign  
That Spring shall come, and cowslips shine  
In those brown spaces 'neath the trees  
Where only last year's leaves one sees  
Heaped sadly as the last wind drave  
Them to and fro the lily's grave.

A robin on a holly-bough  
Sang as if pairing-time were now  
And not a wintry week away :  
The brightest colour of the day  
Was on his orange-feathered breast.  
The silent starlings stepped in quest  
Of food, where new-cut sods were turned ;  
High overhead a pale sun burned.



## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

### EARLY SPRING

PALE clouds of gold and murrey  
    Out of a gray sky lean  
To touch the hills of Surrey  
    In winter-faded green.  
Along the river-edges  
Brown stand the rattling sedges,  
There's no life in the hedges  
    For men to understand.

Eyes that desire the Spring  
    Behold, and are not fain  
The naked boughs that swing ;  
    Ah, sad eyes, look again !  
'Tis you, not Earth, grows duller ;  
For here is Spring's own colour—  
Time has no power to lull her  
    To sleep at his command.

Where last year's leaves are heaping,  
    Behold, new leaves outrun ;  
The hedgerow's twigs are peeping,  
    Pink-tipped, to greet the sun.

## EARLY SPRING

The fields that have lain fallow  
Remember June ; the shallow  
Small brook gives tongue ; the mallow  
Spreads velvet on the sand.

The snail's shell is too narrow,  
He seeks a better house ;  
The nestlings of the sparrow  
About the fields carouse.  
They never saw a city,  
They're shy and pert and pretty ;  
To-morrow—more's the pity—  
They'll bear the city's brand.

But now the leaves are moving ;  
Leaf-buds on every bough  
Are reaching sunwards, proving  
How strong the Spring is now  
In every midrib's veining,  
In every footstalk straining  
Sunwards ; new life is reigning,  
For Spring is in the land.

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

### MARCH

MARCH stands and knocks upon your door,  
Her basket brims with windflowers o'er  
    And spendthrift gold of daffodillies :  
From house to house she begs her bread,  
And fain would fortunes tell, 'tis said ;  
Her feet are bare, and bare's her head,  
Her hair upon the wind is shed,  
    As yellow as Lent lilies.

The gipsy mood is hers, the will  
That by no hearthstone will bide still  
    But must go out in the wild weather.  
She is as lissome as a tree,  
But has no roots to hold her, she  
Was never made at home to be,  
But rather would rough handling dree,  
    She and the Wind together.

The first wild swallow's note is hers,  
And the first gold seen on the furze.  
    There's no wise man that knows her dwelling  
Or where Time found her, but all know

## HERTHA AT SCHOOL

That she is sweet, and swift to go,  
Shy as the west wind, cold as snow.  
Yet once, 'tis said man tamed her so—  
What! *Kiss and then be telling?*

## HERTHA AT SCHOOL

HERTHA was at her lessons yesterday  
And found them hard even to tears, I think.  
She had forgot how to bring green from gray,  
To quicken rosy life in clods of clay,  
And paint the apple-blossoms white and pink.

How should she, dazed with sleep, remember right  
Notes of the blackbird's song when rosetime's here?  
How weave of winter frost the lily's white  
And shape the iris-petal, till the light  
Shone through its delicate purple no less clear  
Than through cathedral glass? How should she  
know

The writing on the hyacinth at all?  
How point the larkspurs in their azure show,  
How hang the crown-imperial's blossoms, so  
That their sweet tears may gather, but never fall?

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

Hertha grew sullen. Such a frown of cloud  
Grew in the sky and would not lift all day.  
The sun was wrapped till sunset in a shroud,  
And would not shine although the wind grew loud  
Trying to blow his angry mood away.  
Ah, Hertha, Hertha! then the tears began,  
You frowned all day and then for ruth you cried  
All night, and when the morning lifted wan,  
She showed us where your penitent tears outran  
An almond-tree abloom in rosy pride.

## ST. PATRICK'S BLESSINGS

HAVE you heard of good St. Patrick how once  
he went his way  
East and west through Ireland for many a night  
and day,  
North and south through Ireland? and everywhere  
he trod  
The world was better for his feet, and greener was  
the sod.

## ST. PATRICK'S BLESSINGS

He saw the dark seals swimming in waters of the  
west,  
He lifted up his hands to heaven and all their  
tribes he blessed ;  
He saw the wicked butcher-birds that their own  
comrades slew,  
And none the less he blessed them, for "they  
know not what they do."

He saw the green sap running in many a forest tree,  
He blessed them, and he blessed the ships whose  
masts their stems should be ;  
He blessed the flower for what she was, the beauty  
of an hour,  
"Man passes, and he leaves behind less fragrance  
than a flower."

The Gods that were, St. Patrick blessed, and all  
fair fantasies  
That have made men more deep of heart, more  
strange to sloth and ease.  
He blessed the dreams too beautiful to be made  
true on earth,  
He blessed the mystery of death, the mystery of  
birth.

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

He came back to his clerics, and in his eyes they  
saw  
The clear light of God's kindness more lovely than  
God's law.  
And to his dying day he bore, for all to understand,  
The beauty of that time when he went lonely  
through the land,  
With blessings on the lips of him and blessings in  
each hand.

## AFTER THE RAIN

THE rain is done, but the skies and the streets  
remember,  
The pavement's dark and sleek with a silky sheen,  
There's fire in heaven, the sun is a smouldering  
ember.  
The wind blows up, and away from its anger lean  
Bare branches of trees where tassels of lime have  
been—  
The rain is done, but the streets and the skies  
remember.

## APRIL

The clouds that were gray are rosy ; there's fire  
in heaven.

The wind that huddled them shivering to and fro  
Herds them no longer, but lets them their own  
way go,

By a breath instead of a bitter chiding driven.  
Like a rose of a hundred leaves the West's aglow,  
The rain is over and done ; there is fire in heaven.

## APRIL

THE world is young that was so old  
While Winter held the frozen land  
Spellbound beneath his heavy hand.  
The world's blood quickens that ran cold ;  
Life is a fairy tale half-told,  
And every field's Tom Tiddler's ground,  
Where lads and lassies may be found  
Filling their baskets to the brim  
With April's silver and May's gold,  
Daisies and crazies.<sup>1</sup> Violets dim  
Betray themselves and ferns unfold

<sup>1</sup> Buttercups.



## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

Their rolled-up fronds, and every bough  
Runs with new sap ; the heathery howe  
Shows gleams of gorse ; on either hand  
Lent lilies for Spring's censers stand.

The tired old world again is young,  
The sweetest songs have not been sung ;  
Though Arthur die and Lancelot fail,  
Young knights have seen and seek the Grail.  
Though darkened be white Guinevere,  
Elaine is pure and Enid dear :  
There are new quests to win or lose,  
And green woodpaths wherein to choose  
What dream is best of all that fly  
Like moths beneath an evening sky.  
Life has new hopes, new fears, new love,  
And a new rainbow gleams above  
In sign God will not drown again  
The wide world's garden. Not in vain  
Falls the shy sunlight through the rain :  
The miracle of Spring anew  
Makes earth a bride and heaven true.

## PRIMROSE DAY

### PRIMROSE DAY

MAKE me a song for Primrose Day.  
The sky is blue that was but gray ;  
There is some softness in the air,  
And here and there and everywhere  
Are hints and promises of green.  
The thorn-boughs tipped with beryl lean  
Out of the hedges that were bare  
Last week, and where the snowdrifts were  
Young nettle-leaves unfold, and there  
The dandelion's green rosette  
With the unrolling fern is met.

Make me a song for Primrose Day.  
Along the streets of London town  
A primrose snowstorm settles down  
And makes each street an amber way.  
Here are tall baskets that o'erbrim  
With posies bound for one day's whim.  
Here are shrill voices that would drown  
All singing, crying their gold wares ;  
And many buy, if no one cares

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

How lonesome are the country places  
Deserted by these primrose faces.

My song is sad because of these,  
My song is light because the breeze  
Has brought along a thought of May,  
And light and sad and brief and gay  
I make my song of Primrose Day.

## EASTER SONG

THE world "smells April," and looks May.  
'Tis near the time of Easter Day,  
And winter-cold indifference,  
Like an old garment, we put by ;  
And keen and glad is every sense,  
And hearts are green that were so dry.  
The least leaf on the orchard spray  
Feels itself kin to all the sky.

I am a leaf, and I renew  
To-day my youth. How long I grew  
Without the sun I do not care ;  
'Tis near the time of Easter Day.

## MAY

Lent lilies sweeten all the air,  
And winter waiting fades away—  
Life is well-nigh too sweet to bear,  
And spring too dear a word to say.

## MAY

CAN you not hear us calling,  
    May, May?  
The fern's unfolding  
And the vetch beholding  
    The day.  
Soft dew is falling  
Where the rose shall be,  
And a whitethroat's calling  
    To the elder tree,  
    "Break, buds, break :  
    Leaves, awake—  
Air's clearer, life's dearer, May's nearer  
    Every day."

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

Old Earth has heard us calling,  
    " May, May !"  
The lilac-buds give answer,  
The aspen is a dancer  
Before May's pageant's here.  
The whitebeam blossoms peer  
Out of their folding leaves,  
The swallows from the eaves  
Come down to say,  
" We heard her footsteps falling  
    Far away."  
For her the cuckoo's calling,  
And the woodpigeons drawling  
In their secret bower ;  
Air's clearer, life's dearer, May's nearer  
    Every hour.

## PEAR-TREES IN BLOSSOM

Across the waiting lands May sent his word,  
A whisper only, but the pear-trees heard,  
And clothed their naked boughs in new array  
Of blossom green-and-white, awaiting May.

## PEAR-TREES IN BLOSSOM

The pear-trees that were leafless all through March,  
And when mad April 'gainst the sky's blue arch  
Built up her rainbow house, as brides appear,  
Now that the master of all magic's here.

May, the great juggler, takes a barren bough,  
Breathes, it is rosy with red hawthorn now ;  
Becks with his finger, and the ringdove shows  
New colours, and new leaves forebode the rose.

The pear-trees heard him when no others heard,  
Or none believed in the awakening word.  
The wind so long was rough, so cold the rain,  
They could not think that May would come again.

But these believed ere yet they heard or saw,  
And a new beauty from their faith they draw ;  
So that beholding them where white they stand  
Holding May's colours in a waking land—

Men say who know not why they are more fair,  
“ Surely there will be harvest and to spare  
In yonder orchards.” But one dreamer knows  
This is their harvest though no other grows.

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

### JUNE

I BRING you tall day-lilies,  
Milkweed and hose-in-hose,  
Red buds of amaryllis,  
And lilac gipsy-rose.  
I bring you red dead-nettle,  
That every hedgerow knows,  
Mallow of softest petal,  
And hose-in-hose.

My will as the wind's will is,  
I blow both hot and cold ;  
I am as white as lilies,  
My idle fingers hold  
For long no flowers other  
Than roses. Men have said  
The white rose is my mother,  
My sire the red.

Misgivings and surmises  
Are mine, and mine shall be  
The harvest hope that rises  
High in the chestnut tree

## THE SPIRIT OF SUMMER

When in her heavy branches  
She feels her blossoms sweet,  
And on the warm air launches  
Her silken fleet.

I am of all things tender,  
And swift to pass away ;  
I am the wave of splendour  
Drawn from the sea of May.  
The nightingale above me  
Sings down the night too soon ;  
I bare to none that love me  
The heart of June.

## THE SPIRIT OF SUMMER

My cap is made of thistledown,  
Woven of green grasses is my gown,  
My veil is made of gossamer.  
Butterflies fan me with their wings,  
And many shy and timid things,  
Covered in feathers or in fur,



## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

Seek me for safety when the storm  
Blows up ; the hare forsakes her form  
And in my shadow lieth warm.  
The squirrel has no thought of fear,  
He perches on my shoulder here  
And cracks his nuts ; and shrew-mice come  
To do me suit and service dumb.  
Once at Heaven's gate I sat all day  
And sang and harped and would not cease—  
I was too happy to know peace ;  
But now I walk a better way.  
Now on the good green earth I dwell  
And have sweet humble tasks to do,  
To brim the foxglove's spotted bell  
With honey, and to fill with dew  
The honeysuckle's drinking-horn,  
Creamy and crimson. Every morn  
I bid the buttercups arise  
And open wide their golden eyes,  
And every night I shake down sleep  
On labouring lives. 'Tis mine to keep  
Earth's little children safe and sound,  
And all the woodland holy ground.

## THE WHITSUN WOMAN

### THE WHITSUN WOMAN

BROWN wallflowers I will bring you,  
Wallflowers red and wallflowers rusty,  
Waywort from the wayside dusty.  
And my meadow-larks shall sing you  
Sweeter song than e'er you heard  
Sung by any outland bird.

I am the Whitsun Lady ;  
Mine are all glowing flowers,  
Coloured by sunny hours.  
Mine are the coverts shady  
Where the ring-throated culver  
Preens his new plumes of silver.

I set the thrush a-singing !  
The whitethroat's glad to hear me,  
Shy rabbits nestle near me.  
The rose is of my bringing,  
I set the silver blossom  
Deep in the elder's bosom.

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

My hand the hawthorn flushes ;  
I whisper to the rushes,  
The secret spell that hushes  
Woods when the storm is nigh.  
The red ant that man crushes  
Fears not my passing by.

Not fairy all, nor quite  
Woman, I give delight  
And pain ; and all things love me,  
Below me and above me.  
I count among my lovers,  
The wind and the wind-hovers.

## MIDSUMMER EVE

'Tis now Midsummer's holy Eve.  
I rede you all your fellows leave  
And seek the elder shade to spy  
On folk of faery passing by.  
But lest for faery wrath you grieve,  
Pin a green clover to your sleeve.

## MIDSUMMER EVE

Behind the elder branches stoop  
As quietly as though void of zest,  
And you shall see the faery troop  
Ride by—and still yourself unguessed—  
The milkwhite horses four abreast,  
Small men-at-arms in scarlet drest,  
And heralds with their flags adroop.

You'll see at first, I dare aver,  
Pages in suits of gossamer.  
And then in frolic company  
The faery ladies, three and three,  
In gowns of green and miniver ;  
Bright-eyed as birds, and sweet to see  
As any summer flower may be  
To winds that come a-courting her.

The faery Mab wears scarlet shoon,  
A red cloak on her shoulders spread.  
The magic colour of the moon  
Is Morgan's : on her hair is shed  
The sallow's gold. With rose leaves red  
Titania is garlanded :  
But saintly Una crowns her head  
With windflowers bound with silver thread,  
White windflowers withering over-soon.

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

But hide you warily and well,  
Lest they should touch you with their spell,  
And you be never moved again  
To song for joy, to tears for bane,  
As once to Ogier it befell.  
Having once seen one faery, he  
No other loveliness could see,  
But made his bedfellow of Pain,  
And Sorrow, riding at his rein,  
Imaged his love illusively.

Grief dire as his has often been  
The gift of Them who light the green  
Dim woodlands with their eyes and hair  
And deathless are as they are fair.  
And many a maid, more bold than wise,  
Who saw them with unlicensed eyes,  
With listless foot has deathward gone  
Wearing, for sign of hope undone,  
Rough garlands of wild rosemaries  
For love of sad-eyed Oberon,  
Grown tired of his undying Queen.

## JULY

## JULY.

SILVER blossom shining in the breast of golden  
elder,  
Spires of lupin seeking God, wasteful balls of  
guelder ;  
All these things the Summer brought Earth, ere  
man beheld her

In July.

Lilies knew her when she passed for the lily's  
spirit,  
Not a rose would open out if she came not near it,  
Bellflowers rang a merry chime, sure that she  
would hear it

In July. ✓

Larkspur for her passing foot taller grew and  
bluer,  
Speedwell's eyes were only gray till they saw and  
knew her—

Time is kinder to the world, Love is all the truer

In July.

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

### HARVEST SONG

HARVEST, Harvest, hither away  
Between the acres of corn and rye,  
Your breath is sweet with the smell of hay,  
Your eyes are deep as the August sky.  
I am your child and your lover I,  
And I will sing you in broken rhyme ;  
My right to sing you let none deny,  
For I learned love in the harvest-time.

Harvest, Harvest, hither to me,  
Tread the thyme till its breath rise sweet  
Over the rise of the smooth green lea,  
Trodden down by your sunburnt feet.  
Loud and strong let all singing be,  
Beating upwards as birds' wings beat ;  
Swift with the passionate pulse of the sea,  
The leap of lightning, the rush of sleet.

## AUGUST'

## AUGUST

THE world is full of honey-bees, the world is full  
of roses,

And all the world's a garden when the summer to  
and fro

Goes trailing over green grass a green gown ; in  
her bosom

She wears a knot of heartsease, in her hair's a  
briar-blossom,

And after her a light wind blows and Music's  
softest closes

Come and go.

The reaper thinks of harvest, and the corn thinks  
of the reaper,

The poppy fears the shining scythe and fain would  
sleep away

Herself to death ; corn-marigolds and cockles are  
a-flutter.

And in the bugle-bloom the bee lies drowned in  
sweetness utter,

And in the sunburnt elder the honey-scent is  
deeper

Than in May.



## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

The reaper thinks of harvest, and the children  
think of nutting,  
And the bramble feels her hips growing red and  
growing strong.  
The ladybirds, like rubies, hang upon the leaves  
of elder,  
And the dew is colder night by night that drops  
upon the guelder ;  
And in the yellow cornfields the steady scythes  
are cutting  
All day long.

## SEPTEMBER

TOUCHED with the pain of passing things  
The heart of Hertha beats more slow ;  
The sunflowers tempt no more the bees,  
The scarlet hosts of maple-trees,  
—The torches of the year—burn low,  
And beauty grows too deadly fair  
For man to bear,  
Because she is at point to go.

## OCTOBER

The maple clothes herself in flame  
When first she hears September's name,  
—A wonderful and wistful word  
Sung by some wise last-summer's bird.  
The bees are busy in the phlox,  
Their thrift from hearts of hollyhocks  
    No honey wrings ;  
No nightingale at twilight sings.

The swifts bethink them of their wings,  
And all the shining afternoon  
The air is full of butterflies—  
Live flowers that storm the heedless skies,  
That fain would quench the hunter's moon,  
And set the world's clock back to June :  
    But all in vain—  
Moths go ; mists come ; and frosts remain.

## OCTOBER

Who was it said  
Earth's beauty waned, the summer being dead ?  
    I give him back the lie.

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

The tulips may be shent, the rose leaves shed,

But here am I—

I with my opal and my shining mist,  
My hair of cloud, my eyes of amethyst.

I am the alchemist who turns to gold  
The silver birch's leaves ; 'tis I that change  
The faces of the meadows, and make strange  
Fields to the beasts that pasture in their grass.  
I tell all beauty she must change and pass ;  
Grow, wither, and be covered with brown mould,  
And rise again, exquisite as of old.

Who was it said  
Change is not beauty ?

I the changer, I

Who make the rose's grave the birthing-bed  
For scarlet turban-lilies ; who have fed  
All mortals with one thought—that life must die—  
Who comfort every grief with one fair thought  
That joy from pain, love out of loss is wrought ;  
Give him the lie.

## HALLOWS E'EN

### HALLOWS E'EN

AWAKE, arise, you dead men all,  
Dead women, waken you !  
The hunter's moon is in the sky,  
Her cruse of frosty dew  
Night empties ; throw your covers off  
Of grave-grass rank and green—  
This is the dead men's holiday  
And Hallows E'en.

The mother with her buried child  
Falls into tender play,  
The baby at her shrouded breast  
Sucks soft, and sleeps away.  
The lover dead twelve years ago  
Seeks out his buried dear,  
Who put her broken heart to rest  
But yesteryear.

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

*' Behold, my love, my hair is black,  
Your bonny hair is white :  
How come my darling's eyes so dim ?'  
" With weeping many a night,  
With sewing many a weary day  
Through years that knew not you ;  
But now I've done with rosemary  
And done with rue.*

*" My garland of dry rosemary  
Hangs where I used to pray ;  
My garden with its tansy-flowers  
Runs wild for many a day.  
The box-plants that I used to tend  
The passing children pull,  
The green leaves strew the way they go,  
Slowfoot, to school.*

*" And I have done with lessons now,  
Have said my last task through,  
And I may rest at last, sweetheart,  
As once I played, with you."  
He kisses her, he blesses her,  
He strokes the faded hair ;  
She never was so dear to him  
When she was fair.*

## NOVEMBER

Brother and sister parted long  
By bitter words and blind,  
Forget the years of severed ways  
And old love have in mind.  
The beggar that of hunger died,  
The girl that died of shame,  
Are playing with dead children here  
Some childish game.

Husband and wife forget the wrong  
That kept their souls apart ;  
Hand lies in hand as tenderly  
As heart beats upon heart.  
This is the day for buried love  
To see as it is seen :  
This is the dead men's holiday,  
All-Hallows E'en.

## NOVEMBER

WHEREIN will she find pleasure to recall  
How red the roses were in middle June,  
How evening primrose from her brittle root  
Sucked strength to lift her honeyed flowers erect ?

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

Bare are the boughs October's eyes saw decked  
With such rich colours when red-ripe to fall  
Was every leaf; the gardens empty all,  
The apple-trees are stripped of their last fruit.  
Her song goes faintly to a mourning tune,  
There is no splendour in her afternoon,  
All thrushes, save the missel-cock, are mute,  
And veiled with heavy vapour is her moon.

She has no memory of the harvest-fields,  
For she was born when husbandmen forgot  
The sheaves for thinking of the seed they sow;  
The only birds she knows  
Are those that after vanished summer go,  
And the red sunset is her only rose.  
Argestes is her minstrel, and he sings  
A song of passing things;  
And all her soul to heavy sorrow yields,  
Forgetful of her crown and of her wings  
That on these chilly days has fallen her lot.

Walking knee-deep among dead forest-leaves,  
For roses that she has not seen she grieves,  
For unknown blue eyes of forget-me-not,  
And unfamiliar tendrils of the vine.

## NOVEMBER

“ For all these things that never can be thine  
Were June’s and August’s. Vintagers remember  
How even grave September  
Wreathed her with grapes, and danced as maidens  
do.”

The North-East tells her as away he goes—  
The roughest wind that blows—  
To shake the empty nests beneath the eaves,  
The walks with twigs to strew.

The lily is a legend to her ears,  
Heard half with scornful laughter, half with tears ;  
She cannot think that where those brown threads  
hang  
Hand over hand the deep-leaved branches sprang,  
And Dijon decked with golden globes the wall.  
Now wretchedly the naked tendrils scrawl  
“ Mene, Upharsin,” where they used to write  
A message of delight.  
November veils in mist her weary head,  
“ Would God my moon were dark, and I were dead.”



## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

### AT THE END OF NOVEMBER

At the end of November I heard the faeries cry—  
The place it was a green rath, and I was passing by  
With a creel full of white fish, and all alone was I.  
There was a new moon rising in a low sky and  
gray,

And through the foggy twilight I heard the faeries  
say—

“ Rise and come away,  
New-born child and newly-married bride,  
Come from cradle, or from husband's side—  
Come, come away.”

At the end of November I took her to my own,  
My Maureen of the gray eyes,—and now I sit  
alone,

I wake my lone and sleep my lone, and Maureen  
never knows

The love is grown into a thorn that she set for a  
rose,

For there's no sound of crying in the green way  
she goes,

## AT THE END OF NOVEMBER

Since she heard them say,  
"Time shall change you, newly-married bride,  
Thin your hair, lay waste your bosom's pride,  
Come, come away."

At the end of November they took Maureen away,  
Out of my arms they stole her betwixt the night  
and day ;

And evening after evening I haunt the rath to see  
If I can win again the wife the faeries stole from  
me,

And on the thieves that made me poor my bitter  
curse I lay

That e'er I heard them say  
Amid their idle dancing along the water-side,  
The spell that draws unchristened child and  
newly-married bride  
To rise and go away.

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

### DECEMBER

I BRING the fogs to town,  
And silence every other bird  
That Robin's plain-song may be heard.  
White pearls of frost are in my crown  
And rubies red as wintry eyes,  
My breast-knot is of ivy-leaves,  
And gray as mist's my trailing gown.

I quench on dale and down  
The last wild orange marigold,  
I turn the lily's last leaf brown,  
And drive the reedbirds from the sedge.  
And the last berries in the hedge  
I take to me forthwith to set  
In midmost of my carcanet,  
That spite of rubies is so cold.

The year is worn and old,  
And dim the dancing visions are  
That led him on from star to star,  
From March to May, from May to June,

## TWELFTH NIGHT

Till now his moon's a waning moon,  
That up the heavens climbs not far.  
The Archer is my sign ; his bow  
Is bent, the arrow's on the string  
That the Old Year's release shall bring,  
But when it flies I shall not know.

## TWELFTH NIGHT

TWELFTH Night is here again. Her glory's over,  
No more a Queen's her mate, a King her lover.  
For pairing maids and boys she hath no care,  
The crown of misrule shines not on her hair ;  
But over mud-splashed ways she paces slow,  
Where late Unreason's abbot used to fare,  
With pomp and pride and goodly company—  
Mummers a many, masquers gay to see,  
Each garlanded with pearly mistletoe.

Old customs pass, as she does. Ere they go  
Salute them each one softly, for they bear  
With them more kindness than their glances show,

## CHILDREN OF THE YEAR

As with averted eyes they pass and pass  
Like shadows showing in a magic glass.  
The root of custom may be beauty's root,  
Though she and beauty bear a different fruit ;  
The root of custom may be faithfulness  
Or love itself, though in a masquer's dress.

# MUIRGEIS

AN IRISH PLAY

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MUIRGEIS O'GNIEVE . . . .	The Bride.
DIARMUID M'CAURA . . . .	The Bridegroom, a provincial King.
O'GNIEVE . . . . .	The Bride's Father, Airé or Chief of Glenmore.
MAURYA . . . . .	The Bride's Foster-sister.
HUGH DALL . . . . .	A Blind Harper.
DONN OF THE SANDHILLS . . . .	A Faery King.
CROHAN . . . . .	Attendant to Diarmuid.

Chorus of Peasants, Wedding Guests, and  
Sea-faeries.

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This play will be shortly produced as the libretto of an Irish opera ; the music thereof, on the Irish scale, is written by O'Brien Butler, Esq.

ACT I

SCENE I.—A SEA-SHORE REPRESENTING MUIR-  
REAGH'S STRAND ON THE COAST OF KERRY

*Enter some peasants, an old man, an old woman, a  
girl, and HUGH DALL, a blind harper.*

OLD WOMAN

Let me rest here a little, and take breath,  
My feet are weary of the silver sands,  
That once I frolicked over like a wave.

GIRL

Why, mother, were you ever young at all?

OLD MAN

Ay, she was young, and twice as fair as you.



## MUIRGEIS

GIRL

You would not say so if your eyes were young.

OLD MAN

Young lips can lie, though.

OLD WOMAN

Ay, Shaun, but she's right.  
We are grown old, indeed. Our eyes are dim—  
We cannot see the sun that shines on her.  
Our backs are to the sun, our shadows go  
Ahead of us, and all our hills are climbed.

OLD MAN

You wept your eyes dim over dying babes  
When famine fell upon us, like a wolf  
Spurned by the pack, and monstrous as a Dhoul.  
My back is bowed with ploughing stubborn fields ;  
Yet men were then less hard of heart than she.

OLD WOMAN

What have green leaves in common with dead  
spunk ?  
The young folk look ahead into the spring.

## MUIRGEIS

Maybe we flouted the gray heads ourselves ;  
And laughed because the old eyes could not see  
More than the graves out on Church Island there.  
Young hearts are hard hearts everywhere, avick !

GIRL

You talk of dim eyes with a blind man here ?

HUGH DALL

This blind man sees a world shut out from you.

GIRL

A world worth seeing ?

HUGH DALL

Ay, so fair a world,  
That no man who has eyes shall pity me.

HUGH DALL (*Solo*)

Rose of the world, she has chosen me  
Out of the world full of men that see—  
She fills my dark with a core of light  
When the neighbours think I am steeped in night.  
Rose of the world, they have words galore,  
(For wide's the swing of my mother's door),

## MUIRGEIS

But their voice blows by me like blowing rain,  
For they know not joy if they know not pain.  
Rose of the world, the grief you give  
Is worth all joys that a man may outlive,  
Is worth all prayers that the colleens say  
On the night that darkens the wedding-day.  
Rose of the world, they may talk their fill,  
But dreams are good and my life stands still,  
While their lives' red ashes the gossips blow,  
And I dream of your beauty, Creevin cno!

GIRL

What is this Beauty that your darkness sees?

HUGH DALL

I cannot tell you now. I'm out of tune,  
Heartstrings and harpstrings both, and all the air  
Is changed to me as if a storm were near.

GIRL

There is no look of storm in all the sky.

HUGH DALL

The storm is in men's hearts then, and 'tis near.

*[Lifts his head, listening.]*

## MUIRGEIS

I see a face now, and I hear a step,  
As soft as Hatred, going on its way  
Snow-footed.

GIRL

Here is no one but ourselves.

HUGH DALL

I tell you Hatred comes, and she is here.

[*Enter MAURYA.*

MAURYA

Do you wait here to see the bride pass by?  
You are too early, she is still at prayer  
Yonder in Loher chapel on the hill.

OLD WOMAN

How looks she?

MAURYA

With the April face of brides.

GIRL

Oh, I would be all June in face and heart  
If I could give my hand to such a mate  
As Muirgeis weds to-day, a King of men,  
Meet for a rose of women.

## MUIRGEIS

OLD MAN

She has fate  
Under her feet, and wears upon her breast  
Fortune for wedding-favour.

GIRL (*laughing*)

By your leave,  
'Tis Diarmuid's heart she wears for favour there.

MAURYA

What do *you* know of hearts ?

GIRL

Much more than you,  
Whose heart is colder than the Druid stones  
When the west wind blows over Ballybrack,  
And brings the rain up with it.

MAURYA

Hold your peace !  
You talk with a child's tongue.

GIRL

You with a snake's.

## MUIRGEIS

MAURYA

I have not stung you for your foolishness.

GIRL

You would' have no one wiser than yourself.

MAURYA

I do not see a wiser, seeing you.

GIRL

Ay, there is some bewitchment on your eyes,  
Or else they would have seen the light ashine  
In Diarmuid's face when Muirgeis looked at him.  
You love not love-looks! Then God mend your  
sight.

OLD MAN

You women talk with tongues like girdle-knives.  
What is this wedding that you speak of it  
As though it were a war? Let us go hence,  
[*Taking HUGH DALL's arm.*  
And leave these wrangling women to their strife.  
What ails you, man?

## MUIRGEIS

HUGH DALL

Nay, but what ails my dreams ?

*[Feels his way to MAURYA, and lays his hand  
on her arm.*

Is it not ill enough that I am blind,  
Having once seen the day, how fair it is ?

MAURYA

Loose me and let me go. *[Draws away from him.*

HUGH DALL

Let go my dreams.

- HUGH DALL AND MAURYA (*Duet*)

HUGH DALL

My dreams are dark.

Is it not ill enough that I am blind,  
And know not Love from Hatred till she speaks,  
And cannot see the rose on bridal cheeks,  
Nor how the brown sail fills before the wind,  
Nor how the hill-fern kindles at a spark ?

## MUIRGEIS

MAURYA

Listen and hark !

I have no power of darkness on your eyes,  
And over these your dreams I have no power.  
I made no midnight of your morning hour,  
Quenched not your sun, and cannot bid it rise.  
It is not for my sake your dreams are dark.

HUGH DALL

My dreams are dark :  
Your shadow over all their lights is thrown ;  
They wear a twilight that is not their own.  
I hear the bat cry, silent is the lark.  
My dreams are dark.

MAURYA

Are your dreams dark ?  
'Tis not my shadow on their brightness thrown.  
My shadow dusks no dream except my own :  
'Tis your own hand that steers your dreamer's  
    barque  
Into the dark.



## MUIRGEIS

HUGH DALL

I can hear anger growing in your heart—  
A barren blossom with a blood-red root.

GIRL

A flower that grows so fast must be a weed.

HUGH DALL

Pluck it and trample on it, weed or flower—  
Lest it should overtop all wholesome growths,  
And drop its blighting dew upon their heads.

MAURYA

Let but its venom kill me first, and then  
Do what you will with it—with it and me.

MAURYA (*Solo*)

My mother heard a curlew cry,  
And followed it across Glenmore,  
And underneath a moonless sky  
A changeling child my mother bore.  
Born of the faery blood am I,  
A bitter doom I dree ;  
Earth is not mine until I die,

## MUIRGEIS

And Tir-na-n'Og is not for me.  
My mother heard a curlew cry,  
And heard it to her daughter's woe ;  
Born of the faery blood am I,  
Yet far away from Tir-na-n'Og.  
I hear winds sing a faery song,  
When half this world's asleep ;  
In two worlds I have suffered wrong,  
I cannot pray, I cannot weep.

## HUGH DALL

You do not lack for friends among the Shee,  
For all your bitter tongue.

## MAURYA

How do you know ?  
For you at least, Hugh Dall, are not my friend.

## GIRL

Maurya does not know what friendship means.  
She gave no love to Muirgeis, though she drank  
One mother's milk with her. She stood apart  
From all our games—she knew not how to play ;  
She could not even quarrel like a child.

## MUIRGEIS

MAURYA

I had not thought that wisdom was a fault.

GIRL

You are all faults because you are so wise.

MAURYA

Pass out and leave me to the company  
Of mine own faults. I have no need of yours  
To make my soul more humble than it is.

OLD WOMAN

Speak her more gently.

MAURYA

Foolish folk or wise,  
You fear me then—and fear shall be my crown  
And cloak against the sorrows of the world.

GIRL

She is not human. Let us go our way  
And leave her to her kingdom made of fear.

## MUIRGEIS

HUGH DALL

Turn my face from her lest I take her path,  
The road she goes is over-dark for me.

*[Peasants pass out, leaving MAURYA alone.]*

MAURYA

Their foolishness goes with them, praise the Gods.

*[Wedding guests cross the stage. With them  
come MUIRGEIS and DIARMUID. MUIR-  
GEIS calls MAURYA to her.]*

MUIRGEIS

Why did you turn your face from me, Maurya,  
When all my other kinsfolk greeted me ?

MAURYA

I am no kinswoman of yours, Muirgeis—  
And did I kiss I should but kiss your hand.  
If you and I were comrades yesterday,  
You wear a ring to-day that makes you queen,  
And me the chief among your waiting-maids.

MUIRGEIS

Do I not hold you by a dearer bond,  
O foster sister ?

## MUIRGEIS

MAURYA

Marriage must untie

All other bonds to make its own knots fast.

What would you have of me ?

MUIRGEIS

Fresh flowers to make

A new wreath for my hair. This garland's dead,

The chapel torches killed it.

MAURYA

Had you worn

Pearls for your garland it had never blenched

For heat or cold, Muirgeis.

MUIRGEIS

But pearls mean tears.

MAURYA

And every woman born is born to weep

Unless she pass the gates of Tir-na-n'Og

While she is young and fair.

## MUIRGEIS

MUIRGEIS [To DIARMUID.

I shall grow old—

I shall grow old and sleep beside the fire,  
Though now the blood is dancing through my veins.

DIARMUID

If you grow old I shall not know it, sweet.  
You have the very May-breath on your lips,  
And you will keep the May-dew in your heart,  
Whatever raven croaks of change and age.

MAURYA

May is immortal but in Tir-na-n'Og.

MUIRGEIS

Who turned your thoughts to-day to Faeryland,  
Or bade you harp always on that one string?

MAURYA

Was I not called a raven by my king?  
And surely he who chose a dove for mate  
Knows that the loyalest raven can but croak.

## MUIRGEIS

### DIARMUID

Your king knows naught of ravens now save this—  
That one is throated like the nightingale.  
Maurya, I bid you sing—I care not what,  
But let Muirgeis sing too that I may hear  
The sunbeams threading through the liquid rain.

### MAURYA (*Solo*)

O, I would go to Faeryland  
And wear the faery red ;  
And wear a gold ring on my hand,  
A gold crown on my head—  
Oro !  
A gold crown on my head.

### MUIRGEIS AND MAURYA (*Duet*)

#### MUIRGEIS

Would you be always glad and gay  
And never sigh to see  
The old green spring, the April day,  
The new leaves on the tree—  
Oro !  
The new leaves on the tree ?

## MUIRGEIS

### MAURYA

I would not walk on meadow grass  
If gold floors I could tread.  
I would not dwell where all things pass  
And love on loss is fed ;  
    Ochone !  
And love on loss is fed.

### MUIRGEIS

There is no sweeter time than spring,  
With hopes of flowers to be ;  
More dear I hold the blossoming  
Than fruit upon the tree :  
    Oro !  
Than fruit upon the tree.

### MAURYA

I would not miss the fickle spring,  
And sad I would not be  
To see new roses blossoming  
'Neath light that warmed not me,  
    Oro !  
'Neath light that warmed not me.



## MUIRGEIS

### MUIRGEIS

I would not go to Tir-na-n'Og,  
I would grow old with you,  
[Turning to DIARMUID.  
And share all joys that you may know,  
And all the sorrows too ;  
Ochone !  
And all the sorrows too.

### MAURYA

I would not live on middle earth ;  
If I could ever be  
One bubble of the faery mirth,  
A wave upon the sea ;  
Ochone—  
A wave upon the sea.

[*Exeunt.*

*MAURYA, left alone, goes down to the edge of the sea.*

### MAURYA (*Solo*)

Thou who wast and art a part  
Of each bird's crying.  
Give me comfort for the sorrow of my heart,  
Thou who art rocks and weeds and foam-bells flying.

## MUIRGEIS

My heart is the nether rock,  
My soul has no room for breath ;  
Thy silence prithee unlock,  
Pronounce the word that is death.

Donn of the Sea-Vats,  
Donn of the Sandhills !

[DONN OF THE SANDHILLS *appears.* *He carries a green branch in his hand. With him are sea-faeries.*

DONN

Why do you call on me, O bitter woman ?

MAURYA

Because you rule the sea, and have the strength  
I need, without the goodness that I fear.

DONN AND MAURYA (*Duet*)

DONN

I give no gifts to earth. I sell  
Sea-flowers and all strange lives that dwell  
In ooze, and weed, and fluted shell,  
What will you buy ?  
Will you have fragile flowers of spray

## MUIRGEIS

A moment white, then blown away,  
Or sea-fires gleaming in the bay  
When storm is brooding in the sky;  
A merchant of sea-ware am I—  
What will you buy ?

### MAURYA

I ask no gift. I would buy sleep  
As dreamless as the sea is deep ;  
Love's eyes have seen and passed me by,  
And I would die.

The woman loves me that I hate,  
The man that I would take for mate  
Loves her, alas, and loves not me.  
My life is broken like a tree  
Whereon the lightning fell of late.  
Sell death to me.

### DONN

Red Maurya, you are far too fair to die.  
Why not buy vengeance ?

### MAURYA

Sell me vengeance then.  
Give me the woman here into my hand  
To slay, give me the man to be my love.

## MUIRGEIS

DONN

This woman loves your lover ?

MAURYA

Even so.

But not for this I hate her—not for this.  
I hate her for the love he gives to her,  
That were to me as bread to one who starves.  
*My* mouth is full of curses.

DONN

Yet she thrives !

MAURYA

Curses like these of mine will find her yet.

DONN

She must be very fair to earn such hate.

MAURYA (*Solo*)

The night is in the black cloud of her hair,  
And near her face a lily is less fair :  
The flower of her face is white and red  
As damask rose leaves upon ivory laid.  
You have loved many women, Donn, and all  
Have died away like flowers as bride lets fall,

## MUIRGEIS

When o'er love's threshold she is softly drawn,  
Have died away like tapers in the dawn,  
You have forgotten them and they forget  
You loved them. They and yesterday have met,  
To-day is ours—Muirgeis is of to-day ;  
A rose of women for your hand to break  
Off from her tree and to your heart to take.  
Pluck her before she also fades away.

## DONN

And if I gathered her, this thorny rose  
That with her sweetness pricks you to the heart ?  
You have not paid me, it is Muirgeis pays.

## MAURYA

She is the payment only ; but a power  
Stronger than you are, Donn, defends her now !  
Above the lintel in her father's hall  
A branch of rowan hangs, and guards the house  
Better than locks and bolts and bars of steel.  
To-night the rose that Diarmuid loves is still  
A flower worth the garden of a god.  
*To-morrow*—ah, to-morrow, she will be  
A rose no longer ; she will be a wife !  
There is one hand alone of all the throng

## MUIRGEIS

Of guests and servants which can let you in  
To pluck this rose from off the parent stem ;  
The hand that dares to take the sacred bough  
And cast it in the flames—this hand of mine.

## DONN

That hand is worthy to lift up a bough  
The rowan cannot live with. Hazels grow  
By every rath and every faery well.  
My palace in the Country of the Young  
Is set about with hazels, and its roof  
Wattled with hazel-boughs. This branch I bear  
Is from my doorway. Take it in your hand.  
*[Gives her the branch.]*

Let the bride touch it, but with finger-tips—  
And she is mine, and she must come to me  
Out of her bridegroom's arms.

## MAURYA

Take her to you—  
And by all Gods that have been and shall be,  
The emptiness she leaves shall be my heaven,  
Whence never I will cry to God or man.

## MUIRGEIS

DONN

Take heed and keep your oath lest you should  
die.

CURTAIN

### SCENE II.—O'GNIEVE'S HALL

*Guests rising from the tables. MUIRGEIS and DIAR-  
MUID in the high seats. MAURYA sits on a bench  
with a green branch in her lap from which she is  
stripping the leaves. As the scene proceeds she  
makes the leaves into a wreath.*

AN OLD GUEST

A last cup to the bride before we rise.  
Your name would turn a ditch's dregs to wine.

O'GNIEVE

I drink to you, Muirgeis, child of my heart!

CHORUS OF GUESTS

Though for drink we had but the dull ditchwater,  
Your name would change it to honey-mead.

## MUIRGEIS

If you but passed over a field of slaughter  
The wounds of the vanquished would cease to  
bleed.

The fallen banners would see you and hear you,  
And rise up again from the dust where they lay :  
The godless thieves of the dead would revere you,  
And death would behold you and turn away.

## MUIRGEIS

I thank you with my heart. A health to you !

[*Drinks.*

DIARMUID (*takes the cup from her*)

I drink to all that love you, and that health  
Is to all folk that look you in the face. [*Drinks.*

## MAURYA

Old haggard women that were beautiful— ?  
Will *they* look in her face, and never curse  
The blossom of her beauty, seeing there  
What they have been and shall not be again ?

CROHAN (*crossing himself*)

Why, she is safe from any evil eye !



## MUIRGEIS

MAURYA

Kings are not strong enough to blind men's eyes,  
Or tie the tongues of women.

CROHAN

Even the blind  
Must see the white soul shining through her face.  
And slander hath no tongue to call day night.

MAURYA (*sneering*)

Oh ay, Muirgeis is safe against all ill—  
Since sight of her must turn all ill to good.  
'Tis plain the snow she treads on must yield  
flowers;

When ears less favoured hear the thunder peal,  
The clouds, to her, will seem to kiss like babes;  
The lightnings, that we wince at, will for her  
Be honey moonlight; hail, that lashes me,  
Will brush her cheeks like petals of a rose  
Thrown by her lover.

HUGH DALL

Ay, and all your sneers  
Cannot but drop as harmless as dead wasps

## MUIRGEIS

Whom the blithe air rejects for all their wings.  
Nothing shall hurt her. She shall put away  
Anger as rowan witchcraft.

[MAURYA *looks towards the door, and laughs.*

CROHAN

Whence this mirth?

MAURYA

I laughed without a reason, as I sneered :  
Peace now and let me weave my garland, Hugh.

HUGH DALL

What leaves are these you weave into your wreath?

MAURYA

Leaves virginally green, fit for a bride ;  
Blight has not smutched them or a hot sun seared.  
Be sure they are not willow leaves, or thorn,  
Sallow, or cypress, or the boding yew.

HUGH DALL

Give me the wreath between my hands to feel.

## MUIRGEIS

MAURYA

Nay, use your ears and not your fingers, Hugh !  
Hark how the king's love flames about the queen  
As though the heart of Angus beat in him.

[*Fiercely.*

What would I give to light your eyes again,  
That you might see, Hugh, how he looks on her,  
And pray to Death to take both sight and life  
Because there was no blindness blind enough !

HUGH DALL

You are in thicker darkness than I am.  
I strike not out on every side like you,  
Eager to dig wounds deeper than your own.  
I am too wise to glut the beast in me.

MAURYA

Who said that I was wounded ?

HUGH DALL

I who know  
The voices of the wounded from the whole—  
Because I cannot see the eyes that dare  
Discovery with laughter or with frowns.

[*Rises and crosses stage.*

## MUIRGEIS

DIARMUID (*to MUIRGEIS*)

I need no provinces to make me rich  
With tribute of gray eagles, corn, and kine,  
That have you for my queen, my shining one.

MAURYA (*nearly, aside*)

I sicken of this tune. Knows he no more?

CROHAN (*laughing*)

Why, every lover sings to such a tune.

DIARMUID

I trow the Gods are envious of the rose  
That I have plucked to-day.

MUIRGEIS

Ah, hush, my king!  
Such praise is ill. I were not fair in heaven.

MAURYA (*muttering*)

Fair as a moonflower when the moon is dark.

DIARMUID

The Gods that gave the joy whereby is Death  
Alone made possible to bear, will not

## MUIRGEIS

Grudge me the rose that strikes into my life—  
Yea, even to the grave and makes it sweet!

### MAURYA

Alas, my lord, 'tis pity that a rose  
Sees but one summer out, and does not know  
How like a rose the winter sunset is!

### DIARMUID

Then you shall be a star and not a rose,  
And shine upon my Dun until all lights  
Be one with utter darkness, and I sleep.

### DIARMUID (*Solo*)

The heart that's set upon a rose  
Must break when summer goes ;  
All flowers must as pilgrims fare  
When winter's trumpet blows.  
September sees the rose-tree bare,  
And no October knows  
What roses are, what roses were—  
My love is not a rose !  
My love shall be a splendid star  
That shines apart, afar.

## MUIRGEIS

Time cannot dim her lovely light,  
Nor winds on it make war ;  
The wide-eyed day, the dreamful night  
Behold no envy mar  
One rose of light that burns up blight  
As fuel for a star.

MAURYA

Yet stars have fallen.

DIARMUID

This star shall not fall.

MAURYA

Speak lower, for the old Gods are not dead,  
And they might find it in their hearts to quench  
This star you boast of, king.

MUIRGEIS (*angry*)

Did Diarmuid boast?  
And shall my waiting-maid rebuke the king?

MAURYA

And is the queen made angry and afraid  
Because a waiting-maid speaks idle words?

## MUIRGEIS

Find pardon for me in your happiness.

[To MUIRGEIS.

And I will be as dumb as Hugh is blind,  
Though star dash into star and be consumed.

## DIARMUID

The jealous darkness mocks the falling star  
That is not less a star the while it falls.  
My star is rising now in your gray eyes.

## MUIRGEIS

Hush! of your praises I am half afraid,  
Diarmuid, beloved, love me not too well.  
I am so happy that I fear all things.

## DIARMUID

I am so happy that I cannot fear  
Though the world quaked beneath my dancing feet.

## MAURYA

Alas, my lord, speak lower, kings have seen  
Their glory pass like smoke upon the wind,  
Queens have outlived their beauty and have felt  
It was a fable when they heard it sung.  
Only the dead are conquerors of change.

## MUIRGEIS

### DIARMUID

You talk of death to one whose thoughts are full  
Of love and life and beauty. Sing instead  
A song worth hearing, lightened with her name,  
As a gray web is shuttled through with gold,  
When woven for the mantle of a queen.

### MUIRGEIS

I fear her song will take no gold from me.

### DIARMUID (*laughing*)

Why, this is almost treason.

### DIARMUID (*Solo*)

The very spirit of all sadness seems  
To look with brighter eyes beholding you,  
And age forgets its weariness of limb,  
And those long years it has outlived its dreams  
And watched its beacon fires grow faint and dim.  
It sees its fairest dream take shape anew.  
Sorrow and shame trodden beneath your feet  
Are sweet as thyme, and evil dies away  
Confronting you, a lamp put out by day.  
None may be hopeless that have seen you, sweet,



## MUIRGEIS

For all thoughts must be pure, all dreams come  
true.

And all men must grow good that neighbour you.

DIARMUID (*speaks*)

Now, Maurya, bring your voice to crown my song  
With words more sweet but not more true than  
mine.

MAURYA (*Solo*)

I heard white bells in a belfry ring  
Where a foxglove flowered in the end of spring ;  
She was white as foam on the lashing sea,  
Though a weedy ditch for her home had she.  
Nightshade and nettle beside her grew,  
But the snowy grace of her no one knew.  
Her bells would ring if the wind but stirred,  
And no one heard.

The nightshade ceased not to distil  
Poison from dew, but would not kill  
The nettle braving frosts and showers,  
The bindweed strangling frailer flowers.  
None saw her beauty in daylight,  
Or dreamed and pined for it at night—  
She flowered, she died, her name grew strange,  
They did not change.

## MUIRGEIS

DIARMUID (*kissing MUIRGEIS's hand*)

I am too near the flower I love to praise  
Her or her singer, though the song rang sweet  
As whitethroat calling whitethroat through the  
dusk.

MAURYA

I sang not only of the foxglove, king.

HUGH DALL (*aside*)

The nettle keeps her sting, I'll swear to that.

MAURYA

The nightshade wears the purple of a queen  
And ripens without fear her grapes of death.  
The foxglove is the blossom of a day.

HUGH DALL

In God's name, peace! That foul things prosper  
well  
Were reason but to hate them with a hate  
Too fierce for song, a hate to nerve the hand  
To pluck them root and flower from out the earth,  
Whose motherhood divine their lives disgrace.

## MUIRGEIS

MAURYA

'Tis well, methinks, you did not name your God,  
Or out of love for gods still throned in heaven  
My tongue had proved Him impotent.

CROHAN

Shame, shame !

HUGH DALL

You cannot tempt my God to throw one stone,  
Though all the fools in Ireland missed the sky  
With stones aimed heavenwards ; but God is God,  
And in His silence all your gods have died  
Wordless and miserable, willing to die.

HUGH DALL AND MAURYA (*Duet*)

MAURYA

The Gods are safe in Tir-na-n'Og,  
Though the world's winds blow hot and cold ;  
But we who stand outside, we grow  
Old.

The Gods are shaken from their mirth  
By nothing that is born or dies.

## MUIRGEIS

HUGH DALL

Moles heap new hills upon the earth,  
New stars write change upon the skies.  
Men build too high or build too low—  
Earth takes her toll of blood and gold.  
The Gods heed nothing—they, too, grow  
Old.

O'GNIEVE

Let the Gods be. To-day it matters not  
Whether they live or die; to-day is ours,  
They have to-morrow—ay, and yesterday—  
The bitter yesterday that stole their youth.  
Upon the grave of that which they have lost  
We stand, the emperors of one fair day:  
Let us not spoil it with the thought of them.  
A dance, you laggards!

HUGH DALL (*muttering*)

Fool!

DIARMUID AND MUIRGEIS

A dance, a dance!

CROHAN

Maurya, will you dance with me to-night?

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## MUIRGEIS

MAURYA (*shaking her head*)

To-night I cannot. *I shall dance to-morrow.*

[*Peasants dance a Cor or reel.*]

HUGH DALL

Is the dance done so soon ?

MAURYA

Why, every step  
They took was planted on your heart and mine ;  
But woe to them who dance on coffins, Hugh.

HUGH DALL

'Tis ours who do not dance. My master speaks,  
And I must sing who am so out of tune.

O'GNIEVE

Rise up, Hugh Dall, and make a song for us  
Shall lift the name of Muirgeis to the skies ;  
There let it shine as shines the name of Fand  
Who strove with Eimer in those twilit days  
When women of two worlds fought for one man.

MUIRGEIS

Ah, the unlucky name !

## MUIRGEIS

DIARMUID

Whose name, asthore ?

MUIRGEIS

My father spoke of the sea-woman, Fand,  
Who drove Cuchullin mad and made green fruit  
Ripen when she drew near it, and cold dew  
Turn fire because she trod it underfoot.

DIARMUID (*laughing*)

And has that name put dread into your heart,  
O my pale lady ? Fear no omens more.  
If faeries came and sang beside my bed,  
And drew their gleaming hair across my lids,  
In that gray hour that comes before the dawn,  
When you were sleeping softly at my side,  
I should not hear them and I should not see.  
You are more strong than Maive, more fair than  
Fand. [*Kisses her.*

MAURYA

Sing, Hugh, and better what the king has sung  
If you are bold enough and blind enough.

## MUIRGEIS

HUGH DALL (*Solo*)

The rose to you gives place,  
What roses ever were  
Born, but to make your face  
More fair, Muirgeis ?  
The quicken looked on you,  
And red with berries grew ;  
Your breath sent summer through  
The air, Muirgeis.

O rose of white and red,  
Soft be the grass you tread,  
The scent of roses dead  
Clings close to you.  
O woman kind and fair,  
Love crowns your shadowy hair,  
The touch of time will spare  
This crown, Muirgeis.

## MUIRGEIS

Why should you sing of roses that are  
dead ?

To-day my world is in full flower for me.

## MUIRGEIS

HUGH DALL

Out of my darkness with prophetic eyes  
I looked ahead and saw the autumn come,  
While you saw only youth, and love, and spring.

DIARMUID

Your eyes are clouded, love. What ails my wife ?

MUIRGEIS

If I was clouded, dearest, it was but  
By a light cloud grown out of last night's dream.

DIARMUID

The fear unspoken is the coldest fear.  
Tell us your dream, Muirgeis, and be at peace.

MUIRGEIS (*Solo*)

I heard a wild bird crying, a seagull of the sea ;  
And the heart out of my bosom was wiled away  
from me.  
My fingers tired of rock and reel, my feet tired of  
the plain,  
I turned my back on harvest and I prayed for  
spring again.



## MUIRGEIS

I go up to the mountain, and I go down to the  
sea,

I am not sad, I am not glad, for there's no heart  
in me.

I go for ever seeking a wandering voice, and all  
I find is the sea lapping against the gray sea-wall.

## O'GNIEVE

Well, daughter, there's no mischief in this dream.

## MUIRGEIS

My cheeks were wet when I awoke, and yet  
My dream was full of music.

## DIARMUID

Like your life.

You move and breathe to music, O my sweet,  
As unto perfume moves and breathes a rose.

## MAURYA (*rising*)

The wreath is ready.

## HUGH DALL (*holding out his hand*)

Give it first to me.

## MUIRGEIS

MAURYA

What will a blind man's fingers make of leaves ?

HUGH DALL

My fingers are my eyes, and all of me  
Feels something strange and evil in the air.  
Is not the hall grown dark, the torches dim ?  
The air tastes salt and cold upon my lips,  
As if it blew upon me from the sea.

MAURYA

You are as full of bodings as a crone  
Bred in the haunted glen of Ballybrack.

HUGH DALL (*feeling the completed wreath*)

These are not rowan leaves.

MUIRGEIS

Bring me the wreath.

HUGH DALL

Here is some mischief. Throw the garland down,  
My queen, lest there be set upon your head  
A crown of sorrow, not a bridal crown.

## MUIRGEIS

### MUIRGEIS

[*As MAURYA puts the wreath on her head.*

Should I wear withered flowers ?

### HUGH DALL

Alas, my queen,

Thrust it from you, for hate has woven it,

And sorcery is in each living leaf.

I tell you something evil darkens down

Upon this Dun with shadow-dropping wings.

[*To DIARMUID.*

Hold fast to her, though death and hell come in

To sunder you. God! had I but mine eyes.

### DIARMUID (*angrily*)

What, would you touch the queen's hand with  
your hand ?

You are too bold a beggar. Stand aside.

### HUGH DALL

Danger is near the woman that I love,

And I would save her, were she twice a queen.

Must I stand by, and see the peril rise

Flood-high, and drown her ? I am not a king.

## MUIRGEIS

DIARMUID (*pushing him back*)

Stand back, lest I forget that you are blind.

[*The doors at the end of the hall open slowly,  
and DONN OF THE SANDHILLS appears on  
the threshold. Sea-faeries surround him.*

DONN (*Solo*)

I call thee from the changing land  
To the unchanging sea ;  
I bring a bride-gift in my hand  
Of immortality.  
The land is fair, but fairer far  
The pastures of the sea.  
Canst thou reach down the lowest star ?  
My sea-fires gleam for thee.  
All rivers run unto one end  
And perish in the sea ;  
Turn thou from lover and from friend,  
And give thine heart to me.  
Thy love shall suffer change and dearth,  
Thy friend the years estrange ;  
There is no faithfulness on earth—  
The sea will never change.

## MUIRGEIS

### CHORUS OF SEA-FAERIES

*[During this song the guests fall asleep in their places.]*

Come with us to that land where evermore  
One listens to sweet music night and day.  
Fair is green Eri, but more fair this shore—  
O! Beauty of all Beauty, come away.  
From head to foot our bodies are like snow,  
Our cheeks are red as foxglove blossoms there ;  
We weave the flowers of April in our hair ;  
And streams of wine and mead with warm flood flow.  
O fair is Eri, but yet not so fair  
As this Moy-Mell where youth grows never old ;  
O! Beauty of all Beauty, you shall wear  
Upon your head a crown of faery gold.  
Then . . . come to that green land where ever-  
more  
One listens to sweet music night and day.  
The bell-branch is not shaken on that shore—  
O! Beauty of all Beauty, come away—  
Come, come away !

### DIARMUID

Is this a masque to make our feast more gay ?

## MUIRGEIS

### MUIRGEIS

I am grown weary of this revelling :  
Our guests have laughed too loud. I would have  
rest  
And music, like this music that is faint  
With its own sweetness like a rose full-blown.

### DIARMUID

Soon you shall rest, heart's heart, and in my arms.  
[DONN *in the doorway lifts a hand, beckoning.*  
MUIRGEIS *takes one step from her husband's side.*

### DIARMUID

Call in the players to play out their play  
And take their guerdon and so get them gone.  
Like you, I am half sick of laugh and song ;  
This music weighs like sleep upon my lids.

HUGH DALL (*struggling against the sleep-spell*)

This music is enchanted, and I curse  
The makers of this music. Name the Name  
That undoes sorcery—the sacred Name.  
What is this darkness that enshrouds my soul  
And keeps my lips from utterance of that name ?

## MUIRGEIS

It holds me fast as in a throttling web ;  
One word would break it. Will not some one  
speak ?

Speak the great Name—Maurya, even you—  
You at the threshold of this dreadful night.  
The Name, the Name. Speak it.

[MAURYA *laughs*.

Who laughed ? Ah, Witch !

[MAURYA *laughs again*.

### MUIRGEIS (*Solo*)

The music draws me as a drop of dew  
Is drawn up by the sun and seen no more.  
Can this be death, this power that passes o'er  
Body and soul, and breaks all bonds I knew ?  
Slowly and surely sleep is wresting me  
From thin dim hands that have no power to hold ;  
Hands that I know were dear to me of old,  
That fain would help but cannot set me free.  
I float away along a magic stream  
Of music sweeter than the summer wind's.  
Farewell to you, kind hands that sleep unbinds.  
Farewell, you lidded eyes—make me your dream.

## MUIRGEIS

### CHORUS OF SEA-FAERIES

Wilt thou go with us, Muirgeis,  
Down to the sea ?  
Here's thy home.  
White flowers of foam  
Thy flowers shall be.  
Donn of the Sandhills waits  
For thy coming feet ;  
The sea has set its gates  
Open for thee, sweet.  
Oh !——Wilt thou go with us, Muirgeis,  
Down to the sea ?  
The waves are calling,  
Beckoning thee.  
Wave on wave gleams  
Along the strand ;  
Heavy with dreams  
They seek the land,  
Muirgeis !  
We are waiting, we are waiting——

MUIRGEIS (*singing*)

I am coming.

[MUIRGEIS goes out with DONN. MAURYA, who



## MUIRGEIS

*has been standing close to the threshold, now goes to the door, peers out after them, laughs and pushes the door to. She goes to the bride's seat next to DIARMUID and seats herself in it.*

DIARMUID (*starting up from his sleep*)

Muirgeis !

CURTAIN

## ACT II

SCENE I.—A WELL AT THE EDGE OF A WOOD IN  
BACKGROUND.

MAURYA *sits beside it with a pitcher at her feet.*

*Enter* DIARMUID

DIARMUID

You are as still as if to shield some dream  
Your flesh became impenetrable stone.

## MUIRGEIS

### MAURYA

I dreamed that I came, thirsting, to this well  
And deeply drank, but deep enough to quench  
My fiery core of thirst I could not drink.  
Does my lord know such thirst ?

### DIARMUID

I bear one thirst  
That never shall be quenched until I die.

### MAURYA

Although your heart burned with volcanic fires,  
One dewdrop falling might send comfort there.

### DIARMUID

The fever of my fire will not abate  
Until men quench their thirst with burial ale  
Drunk to my name, and treading down the earth  
Make ash of that which they call Diarmuid now.

*[A bell tolls, and peasants cross stage, singing  
a dirge.]*

### CHORUS OF PEASANTS

God who makest wars to cease,  
Give this troubled spirit peace ;

## MUIRGEIS

Let his portion now be rest—

Only rest.

He has tasted joy and woe,

Ta'en the thorn and felt the throe :

For Thy sake he let earth go—

Give him rest.

With his face towards the East

Sleeps the shepherd, sleeps the priest ;

Give him for his wage at least

Dreamless rest.

In Thy leash the storm restrain,

That he hears not wind or rain,

Till Thou bidst him rise again

With the blest.

*[They pass out and the bell tolls again.]*

## DIARMUID

Who is it that they keen for? Who is dead?

## MAURYA

The old priest, Shane O'Reilly. It was time

He died, because he had outlived his wits.

Allowed the altar lights to gutter down,

## MUIRGEIS

Brought weeds instead of flowers to the shrine,  
Forgot the hymns and sang old ranns instead,  
And prayed to trees and rivers and the stars.

## DIARMUID

What did they want with him, the heartless Shee  
Who steal the young away? They love not age  
And weakness, and the twilight of the mind.

## MAURYA

He was so old the crows above him hung  
Cawing to tell him he was ripe for death ;  
He had forgotten he was ever young,  
And all the joys that springtime halloweth.  
He chid the cuckoo shouting in the tree,  
The flowers for wasting gold-dust on the air,  
The thrush for singing through the vesper prayer.  
So Earth was angry with him, and the Shee  
Came out from rath and rock to work him ill,  
Because he would have broken in his pride  
Beauty that had no purpose save to fill  
Men's eyes with loveliness, but freely gave  
Her wealth to wise man, beggar, fool, and knave.  
Thus he was faery-struck, and thus he died.

## MUIRGEIS

DIARMUID

God give him peace !

MAURYA

Why do you pray that prayer ?

*You* have no peace.

DIARMUID

Therefore I know its worth.

MAURYA

Lift up your head, put sorrow from your heart,  
And pray a king's prayer to the kinglier gods.

MAURYA (*Solo*)

The old gods have not gone, they will not go,  
The woods behold them still, and the hills know.  
At twilight women hear them,  
And fishermen draw near them,  
When with the kiss of dawn the sea's aglow,  
For the old gods have not gone and will not go.  
Whoever walks by moonlight on the sand  
May chance upon the shining track of Fand.

## MUIRGEIS

He may hear the ninth wave calling,  
See the flaming dewdrops falling,  
And watch the Dagda passing, old and slow,  
For the old gods have not gone, and will not go.  
The birds of Angus fly in every wood,  
And Dana smiles beneath the violet's hood ;  
And every little river  
Has a message to deliver  
If the world would only wait to hear, and know  
That the old gods have not gone, and will not go.

## DIARMUID

You talk of dead things.

## MAURYA

They have never died.  
They are not like these saints whose shadowy fame  
Is as a thin smoke shaken by the wind—  
A fire of rotten leaves that has no flame,  
Nothing but drifts and whirls of sullen smoke ;  
These are alive, blood in their veins is red,  
Hatred is hot and heavy in their hearts,  
But deadlier the love-light in their eyes  
Who choose and take and render not again.

## MUIRGEIS

### DIARMUID (*Solo*)

They do not lose their loves like tamer folk,  
Or if they lose they do not grieve so long,  
Knowing Time has more gifts beneath his cloak,  
And that at last all sorrow makes a song.  
Nine hundred years Lir's children bore their sorrow,  
Their grief will be a lullaby to-morrow.  
Another Diarmuid won his love, and lost  
And found his love again, and ere he died  
Loved his life utterly, then turned and crossed  
A spear with Death, and perished, satisfied.  
Fate did not bury Grania with her lover,  
But both their graves the same green grass grows  
over.

The gods love power and beauty, and naught else.  
Yea, they release the hands they held in theirs  
When violets fade in eyes, as flowers in dells,  
And smiles are but the chasms 'twixt despairs.  
Never will they remember withered flowers  
Even to say four words, "These are not ours."

### MAURYA

What if the gods forget, the gods can pack  
Eternity in one small hour of love,

## MUIRGEIS

Till all man's universe remembers them  
For ever and for ever. Now's your hour  
To ask of gods who love you, and will give  
With lavish hands, remembering for one hour  
That you are theirs who made you. Ask, O king,  
What boon you will—your hour has come to you.

### DIARMUID

You offered water—what if I ask blood  
To quench the thirst of steel whose nerve I am?  
I need no priestess to convince my heart  
That no one vainly asks the gods for blood.  
Shall it be blood, then, Maurya?

### MAURYA

Hark, your sword  
Rings in its sheath because we talk of war.

### DIARMUID

And yet I think I would not draw my sword  
If Danes were storming at my palace gates,  
And Reencaharagh's roofs were all aflame.  
I have not anything on earth to lose  
Who have lost Muirgeis.



## MUIRGEIS

MAURYA

Would you lose yourself?

Speak like a king, think like a king again.  
You shall burn like a fire, and you shall have  
Forests of flags to tread down underfoot  
If you will call upon my deathless gods  
Who answer vengeance ere they answer love.  
Women shall love you as men love Desire,  
One woman shall not only call you king,  
Confess you master of her life and death,  
But worship you as God, lie at your feet,  
And wipe the war-stains from them with her hair,  
And kiss the dust from them as I do now.  
I am that woman, Diarmuid.

*[Falls at his feet.]*

DIARMUID

In God's name,

Rise up!

MAURYA (*rising to her knees*)

But I am prouder being here  
Than lifted up to be a queen of men.

DIARMUID

Proud—in the dust?

## MUIRGEIS

MAURYA (*rising*)

Why not? The dust long since  
Lost and was comforted, ate, drank, and slept,  
Laughed, loved, and mourned, and set its heart on  
dust,  
And pleaded to the dust, as I do now.

DIARMUID

Did the dust plead to ears as deaf as mine?

MAURYA

My lord *shall* hear unless he strikes me dumb  
With some word sharper than my love can bear.  
And yet I think the love could bear all words  
That bore to see you shrink from its frank flame  
As if there were such thing as sullied fire,  
Although the heart it did devour were hell's.  
I am past shaming, being lifted up  
—No, not cast down, my king—with love that  
knows  
No rights except its own, no laws, no bounds.  
I will not be ashamed for loving you—  
I justify myself with loving you.  
Let my lord look me in the face, and say

## MUIRGEIS

If this my love be not a gift for kings  
To lift up from the dust—to keep—to keep?

### DIARMUID

If I were flesh and blood, I should be wroth  
Because you hold man's faith so cheap a thing.  
Being a stone, I am not wroth or shamed,  
Nor moved except to wonder at your fire  
Spent on my coldness.

### MAURYA

You are not a stone.  
Did you not kindle when Muirgeis's eyes  
Dwelt upon you a little? Now my soul  
Dwells upon you and worships and desires.  
Will you not burn as I do? Is there not  
Fire in this rock for me?

### DIARMUID

Cease. There *was* fire  
That answered Muirgeis. It is ashes now.

### MAURYA

But if one kneels and blows upon gray ash  
Sometimes a flame leaps up where all seemed dark.  
Shall not my breath make this fire burn again?

## MUIRGEIS

DIARMUID

Never.

MAURYA

Will you be lonely all your days,  
Alone at nights to bear delusive dreams?

DIARMUID

I dream of Muirgeis, and if waking be  
A lonely thing, man may grow used to grief,  
And I will bear mine till she comes again.

MAURYA

Diarmuid, she will not come though you should bear  
Your sorrow as a woman bears her child,  
With gladness and with trembling. She forgets—  
Your very name is strange to her.

DIARMUID (*fiercely*)

A lie,  
Though all your Gods should shout it from the skies.

MAURYA (*passionately*)

Diarmuid—

## MUIRGEIS

DIARMUID

I will not hear you. Loose my arm.

*[Pushing her away.]*

Lose memory of Muirgeis in your arms?  
Cover my eyes with your bright locks of hair,  
Lest I should dream of tresses black as night?  
Nay, do not speak or cling about my knees—  
Lightning that God decrees shall smite a tower  
Halts not whatever ivies clasp its walls,  
But cleaves at once through clinging arms and stone.  
I dare not pity you, for I must strike  
Lightnings of truth against this love of yours  
And shatter it to pieces round us both. *[Exit.]*

MAURYA

What is there left to live for in this earth?  
Nothing remains, so now for nothingness.  
Donn of the Sandhills, come to me again.

*[DONN appears with some faeries. Their  
faces are angry and sorrowful.]*

DONN

What would you have now?

## MUIRGEIS

MAURYA

Rest, I'm sick of life.

DONN

And what is this to me ?

MAURYA

Enough. You're here.

With all your power submissive to a cry.

Give Muirgeis back to Diarmuid. I repent—

I break the pact I made.

DONN

There are few gods

Would answer, save by lightning, such a prayer.

MAURYA

I am too sad to fear your lightnings, Donn.

DONN

Cannot your wild red beauty blot her out

Of Diarmuid's memory, even as fire

Eats up the writing on a Druid scroll,

Though it was covered with the names of gods ?

## MUIRGEIS

MAURYA

My beauty is a nettle, not a fire ;  
Myself is blistered, Diarmuid is not warmed.  
I have no heart to struggle any more.

DONN (*tauntingly*)

These two that are too strong for all your craft,  
Be sure that they will smile and pity you—  
And o'er their pity smear a sly contempt  
For one who had not courage for her hate.

CHORUS OF SEA-FAERIES

Ah! fool and blind, you asked and did not know,  
And now again you know not what you ask ;  
You draw your hand back from your chosen task,  
Too weak a thing for perfect joy or woe.  
You are not strong enough to let your Hate  
Conduct you unto its appointed end.  
You'd have two goals to win, two ways to wend,  
For ever you shall stand outside love's gate.  
Heaven will have none of you, earth will have  
none,  
You are denied of darkness and the sun.

## MUIRGEIS

MAURYA

I know. My will is broken—so am I.

DONN

You are of those that do not dare to live,  
So have no part with the undying ones  
Who made themselves immortal with great sins,  
A shining love or an eternal hate.  
You could not strike your blow, and be content  
With what you sinned your soul for, though you  
dwelt  
Under hell's porches all your flaming days.

MAURYA

Your scorn can beat me down no lower.

DONN (*smiling*)

No.

For you remember once how high you stood,  
How sure of Diarmuid's love you were.

MAURYA

Have done.

Give Muirgeis back to him and let me die.



## MUIRGEIS

DONN (*Solo*)

Thou shalt not die but live—

    This doom I give—

Thou shalt not die but live, and bear in thee

    The sorrow of the sea.

Because thy love was stronger than thine hate,

    Our fate shall be thy fate.

Because much bitterness thy soul has known,

We take thee for our own.

    A wave upon the sea

Thou shalt have many voices, but no words,

    Loveless as rocks shalt be,

And wild as the sea-birds.

The hail shall lash thee, and the caves shall keep

For thee no place of sleep.

The wind shall drive thee shorewards 'mid the  
foam,

But never bring thee home.

Thou shalt be accompanied by foam and weed,

    But have no friend.

Far shalt thou wander, yet thou shalt not speed,

    Strive to no end.

Anger and Love to thee were evil guides,

    Quenched is thy star :

## MUIRGEIS

Thou shalt be homeless as the wandering tides  
And the tossed seaweeds are.

[MAURYA *falls on her face at DONN's feet.*

### CURTAIN

SCENE II.—O'GNIEVE'S HALL AS BEFORE.

DIARMUID *lying on couch by the hearthplace*

DIARMUID (*raising himself on his arm*)

I thought the door moved under some one's hand,  
Some one afraid to knock or enter in.

Muirgeis, belovéd, is your ghost outside?

Enter, O little ghost, and come to me.

Kiss me to death and I shall be content.

It is not Muirgeis.

[*Sighing.*

She would never stand

Indifferent, and hear me call on her

As the gods stood of old when Eri cried,

Sick with the plague, stabbed at by Danish swords.

DIARMUID (*Solo*)

My heart is heavy night and day, my fair love  
leaving me,

## MUIRGEIS

That from my path you turned away to dwell  
among the Shee,

Where none grows old and none grows cold for  
hope or memory ;

I am most sad while you are glad, my fair love  
leaving me.

Now every day and all night long I wear the bitter  
rue

And hear a wayward faery song when I would  
dream of you.

In all men's ears my tale is told, my grief's for all  
to see,

Sad for your sake I sleep and wake, my fair love  
leaving me.

You come not even to my dreams between the  
night and day.

And have you drunk of faery streams that washed  
your love away,

O heart of gold, and left you cold as water and as  
free ?

Ah ! wirrasthru, my heart's with you, my fair love  
leaving me.

*[Enter HUGH DALL and CROHAN shaking  
the rain from their garments.]*

## MUIRGEIS

CROHAN

It rains as if the dams of God had burst,  
And 'twas His mind to drown the world again.

HUGH DALL

The gentle people are abroad to-night ;  
I felt their rain-cold fingers plucking me.  
To-morrow we shall hear of stolen girls  
And men drowned at the fords——

CROHAN (*interrupting*)

Be silent, Hugh!

Talk not of thefts—there is a robbed man here.

[*Looking at DIARMUID.*]

HUGH DALL

How could I know it, man? I have no sense  
To tell me when I'm near an empty heart.

DIARMUID (*looking up*)

Is it so wild a night?

CROHAN

I never saw

A sky so full of hurrying rags of cloud.

## MUIRGEIS

There is no moon, and all the stars are quenched,  
And the wind crawls and shudders through the fern  
Like a wild beast in hiding.

HUGH DALL

All the doors  
Are bolted in the village, lest the wind  
Should pluck them open, and such folk pass in  
As are not made of flesh and blood and bone,  
But builded up of fire and dew and dreams.

DIARMUID

There are no dreams worth dreaming, since no dream  
Restores her to me.

HUGH DALL

Yet she is not far  
From you to-night, for this is Hallows E'en,  
When all the Shee are busy in our world,  
And dead men rise again from churchyard earth,  
Brown boglands, and the ooze of river-beds.

HUGH DALL (*Solo*)

The mothers gather round the fire  
And tell old tales with wistful breath

## MUIRGEIS

Of far-off lands of heart's-desire  
Wherein no soul shall taste of death.  
And Connla's name each woman saith  
As she sits spinning by the fire.

To-night is Hallows Eve, to-night  
Dead men arise and leave their graves,  
The sea-wives call among the waves,  
The Shee are strong with double might,  
The last man dead a comrade craves,  
And ogham stones find tongues to-night.

## CROHAN

To-night men find in dreams what they have lost.

## DIARMUID (*impatiently*)

I'm sick of dreams and dreamers. Let me be.  
One talks, another prays, a third one tries  
An idiot's charm, and still she never comes.  
I'm sick of all your wisdom.

## HUGH DALL

Peace, for shame!  
If she should come to-night from Tir-na-n'Og,  
Where always men have honey on their tongues,

## MUIRGEIS

And wit and laughter and sweet courtesy,  
And, ere her fingers raised your door-latch, hear  
Your words, she would turn back in grief and shame.

DIARMUID (*springing up*)

Are you all sworn to-night to drive me mad ?

HUGH DALL

[*Gropes his way to DIARMUID and touches him  
on the arm.*]

Bethink you of your birth. Are kings driven mad  
By words, mere words, although they buzz like  
flies?

The darkness that has confined me from light  
Caged not my soul, else were I not a man—  
And are you not a man who are a king ?

DIARMUID (*heavily*)

— A man whom sorrow will not quit till death.

HUGH DALL

I hear already her departing feet,  
And other feet are on the threshold now.

## MUIRGEIS

### DIARMUID

The feet I hear are but the feet of Hope,  
Whom I have driven from me, as a thief  
Who steals from men the strength to bear their  
dooms.

### DIARMUID AND HUGH DALL (*Duet*)

#### HUGH DALL

Thou that of Hope wast tortured yesterday  
No more shalt suffer, for she turns away  
Her head, gold-crowned with flowers and spikes  
of whin—  
But who is this comes in ?

#### DIARMUID

Is it not Death that comes my grief to end ?  
They stand aside, my lover and my friend,  
And pity not, but surely Death will come  
With comfort swift and dumb.  
Come, Death, on noiseless feet, take my disaster,  
The grief that breaks me, bind it with the vaster  
Sorrows of yesterday in thy great sheaf,  
O harvester of grief.



## MUIRGEIS

HUGH DALL

The hand that hesitates is not Death's hand,  
The faltering foot is not the foot of Death,  
*He has no need to stand at closed doors.*

*[Soft knocking heard.]*

Open the door to her.

CROHAN

Are you gone mad?  
Has the great rain washed your last wits away?  
It is the wind that fumbles at the door.

DIARMUID

I am shut out from all I love on earth,  
And so I have no love for fastened doors.  
Even the wind is welcome to come in.  
Open the door to whosoever knocks.

CROHAN

My lord—

DIARMUID

My servant, must thy lord speak twice?

## MUIRGEIS

CROHAN

*[Going to the door, and hesitating with his hand upon it.]*

It is the faeries' weather, and the time  
When dead men rise to seek the living out.  
If 'twere a faery's hand upon the door—

DIARMUID

They've entered once, and shall come in again  
If 'tis their pleasure.

*[Comes forward angrily, and throws the door open, CROHAN being thrust behind it, and discovers MUIRGEIS on the threshold, clad in green with yellow roses in her hair.]*

In God's name, come in.

Muirgeis, the blind man saw you, and not I—  
O love, come back at last!

*[Takes her in his arms.]*

MUIRGEIS

I have come back  
Only half glad, like some one born again. *[Aside.]*

## MUIRGEIS

CROHAN

Is it the living lady or her ghost?

HUGH DALL [Scornfully.

Why, even *I* have clearer eyes to see.

CROHAN

You do not see that she is white as snow.

I think it is her spirit after all.

[*They come down stage, leaving MUIRGEIS and  
DIARMUID together.*

DIARMUID AND MUIRGEIS (*Duet*)

DIARMUID

Ah, sweet, to hold you to my heart again,  
And see your face unchanged look up at me.  
My face is changed, Love, with this half-year's  
pain.

Leaves were not green to me, nor flax-flowers blue.  
Now are my chains undone, and I am free,  
And my life quickens like a flower anew,  
Breaks bud and shakes out blossom, seeing you.

## MUIRGEIS

### MUIRGEIS

It seemed to me that in a sun-girt bower  
I drank of sunlight one immortal hour,  
Because there is no sunset for the Shee.

### DIARMUID

For me there was no night, there was no day,  
Only a hollow peopled by dead clay.

### MUIRGEIS (*touching her garland*)

I do not think that these pale roses knew  
Aught of the clay; they lived on light and dew.

### DIARMUID

Your voice is music, but your words are chilled  
With something supernatural and strange.  
I would these roses were lusmairi, plucked  
But now, yet homesick for their Irish bogs.  
Speak again, dear, and call me by my name  
That was not sweet until you uttered it.

### MUIRGEIS

I knew your name—it trembles on my tongue,  
Refusing sound. This only I recall,  
A word more fair than even roses.

MUIRGEIS

HUGH DALL

Love ?

[CROHAN *goes out.*

DIARMUID

Ay "love," although love looks upon me now  
With eyes that know the thing her lips forget.

[*Bitterly.*

O when did Diarmuid steal the name of God,  
That he should nameless be to his heart's heart ?

[*Lets her hands go.*

MUIRGEIS

Your eyes would tell men you are not a God  
Whatever splendid lie were on your lips,  
For they are sad and angry.

DIARMUID

They may be ;  
Was ever man's prayer answered so before ?  
Are there no Gods but jesters ?

MUIRGEIS

There are Gods,  
For I have seen them.

## MUIRGEIS

DIARMUID

Therefore you have seen  
What mortal should not look upon and live.  
Turn your eyes from me, Muirgeis, for they burn.

MUIRGEIS

I have seen Gods and died not, and mine eyes  
That saw theirs scatheless yours need never fear.  
They always smiled. If mortals crossed their wills,  
It might be that they slew, but still they smiled.

DIARMUID

Forget the Gods, remember this one man  
Who loved and lost and hungered after you,  
And loves you still, and hungers while you stand  
With lips that smile while saying "I forget."

MUIRGEIS

How should one not forget what passed on earth  
Who has spent seven days in Faeryland ?

DIARMUID

Seven days ? 'tis half a year.

## MUIRGEIS

MUIRGEIS (*startled*)

I did not know.  
Seven days were all I counted.

DIARMUID

Is this love  
That can forget love's name in seven days?  
Why, I remembered you and wept for you  
And cursed the light that did not shine on you,  
Muirgeis, for half a year.

MUIRGEIS (*turning to HUGH DALL*)

Are you of those  
I should remember?

HUGH DALL

I am one of those  
Who have remembered Muirgeis half a year.

DIARMUID

Dead love remembered is a kinder thing,  
A warmer thing to lay into the breast  
For comfort than a living love like this.  
O Muirgeis, better to have seen your ghost

## MUIRGEIS

Smile through the frosts of death than see you  
stand  
A stranger to yourself.

HUGH DALL

My king does ill  
To cry his anguish out into a shell  
That can but whisper into every ear  
Its faint reverberation of the sea.

DIARMUID (*Solo*)

O body of all beauty that I loved  
And love, where is the soul gone forth from you,  
The white soul clearer than the morning dew,  
More lovely than a rainbow after rain.  
Will you not quicken in my arms anew,  
Muirgeis?

You were a torch that in dark places moved  
And led lost footsteps to the kindly plain,  
You were as fragrant as the trodden thyme  
That breathes all sweetness from the heart of pain,  
Blessing the feet that bruise it as they climb.  
You were as gracious as the evening rain  
To wounded men that bore the battle-strain,



## MUIRGEIS

But had no part in victory or defeat.  
O body of all beauty, soul most sweet,  
Will you be twain that once in one were knit,  
Muirgeis? [Speaks.  
Muirgeis, my wife——

## HUGH DALL

The faeries have not loosed  
Their hold on her, nor will they till she weeps.  
[*The doors are thrown open and O'GNIEVE  
enters hurriedly, with attendants. He  
embraces MUIRGEIS, who stands passive.*

## O'GNIEVE

I thought that I should die a childless man  
And never see or hear you any more.  
O bird of love, thrice welcome to your nest!

## MUIRGEIS

What voice is that which calls and cries outside?

## DIARMUID

No voice that you shall answer——

## MUIRGEIS

O'GNIEVE

There's no sound  
Except a curlew crying on the bog,  
A skein of wild geese going to the sea.

[*Music outside.*]

MUIRGEIS

Was I not called?

DIARMUID

No, sweet, not while I live  
To make for you a chain of flesh and blood,  
Body and spirit. Once I let you go,  
But not a second time.

O'GNIEVE

Call Maurya here.  
Bid her unbind these roses from your hair.  
They are not garlands for an Irish queen,  
But meet for some wild woman of the Shee.

MUIRGEIS

I know *that* name. Bid Maurya wait on us.

[*Exit an attendant.*]

## MUIRGEIS

DIARMUID

Do you remember her name and nôt mine ?  
Is hatred strong as love ?

MUIRGEIS

Hatred and love,  
Sorrow and doubt, desire, despair, disdain,  
Mean nothing to me now.

Did they mean aught ?

HUGH DALL

They are the world, and they were you, my queen.  
Hatred, like love, draws sparks from hearts of  
stone :  
Lips cannot keep their sweetness without sighs,  
Eyes cannot keep their brightness without tears.

MUIRGEIS

Have mine eyes lost their light then ?

DIARMUID

No, they burn  
Too brightly for this world of shade and shine.

## MUIRGEIS

DIARMUID (*Solo*)

Your eyes are over-bright, your laughter rings  
Too gaily for this world of shine and showers.  
Think of all gray, remote, and hapless things,  
Lost ships, and fallen trees, and farewell hours,  
That miss the very words they meant to say.

Mothers that raise to heaven a childless cry ;  
A rainbow of five colours in the sky,  
A witless brain that makes the children mirth,  
A graceless tale that is too old to die,  
And beauty bringing sin upon the earth.

*[A cry heard from outside.]*

## MUIRGEIS

Is this the sorrow you would have me know—  
This wandering voice that cries outside the door ?

*[The doors open and the body of MAURYA is  
brought through the hall. The Banshee's  
keen is heard outside.]*

MUIRGEIS (*hurrying to the bier*)

O little sister, is it thus you come  
To bid me welcome home ?

## MUIRGEIS

*[She bursts into tears and turns to her husband  
with outstretched hands.]*

O Diarmuid, Diarmuid !

Come to me, comfort me. What thing is this  
That lies before me here and does not speak,  
Though my tears drop upon it ?

DIARMUID (*taking her in his arms*)

Why, my sweet,  
This thing is sorrow and the half of love.

*[As the curtain descends the voice of DONN is  
heard outside singing.]*

A wave upon the sea,  
Thou shalt have many voices, but no words,  
Loveless as rocks shalt be,  
And wild as the sea-birds.

## CURTAIN

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3







